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New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 23

Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution (A/56/L.47)

Mr. Hybl (United States of America): Building a peaceful and better world is the underlying principle of the United Nations Charter. Usually the Organization does this by considering peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian assistance. Today we are considering how to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

Through sport one learns fair play, mutual understanding, solidarity and friendship. These are virtues that the United Nations strives to embody in its work and as an example to the world community. Today, the Assembly can support the ideal of teaching the youth of the world not about sport, but to use sport to promote peace and the well-being of society.

At its forty-eighth session in 1993, the Assembly responded to the appeal of the International Olympic Committee, which revived in the modern era the ancient tradition of the "Olympic Truce". Commencing in the seventh century BC, the Olympic Truce was established as a principle of inter-State relations for ensuring the safe passage and participation of all concerned to Olympia for the Olympic Games.

The Assembly also proclaimed the year 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal on the occasion of the centenary of the International Olympic Committee, which was founded in 1894. Its revival was reaffirmed by the Assembly at its forty-ninth session prior to the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the Centennial Games, hosted by our country; again at its fifty-first session on the occasion of the Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan; and then again in 1999 prior to the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney, Australia. Since 1994, various Presidents of the Assembly and Secretaries-General of the United Nations have made solemn appeals to the world community to continue this tradition.

Most recently, the historic Final Declaration of the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 included an appeal to observe the Olympic Truce and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal.

It gives my delegation great pleasure that the United States is the host of the XIX Olympic Winter Games, to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, from 8 to 24 February 2002. I am particularly pleased, not only because I am a member of the United States delegation to the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly, but also because I am a member of the International Olympic Committee and have served as President of the United

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States Olympic Committee during Olympic Games. I would like to note that there are at least several Olympians in this great Hall today and we certainly appreciate their presence. They continue to apply the lessons learned through athletic competition for promoting a peaceful and better world.

Salt Lake's opening ceremonies are a mere 59 days from today. Since the revival of the modern Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens, Greece, this is the eighth time that the United States will have served as host country and we invite the world to our doorstep for what we feel will be the best Winter Games ever. These will be the first Games of the new century and of the new millennium. Athletes from 80 nations, the largest number ever to participate in the Olympic Winter Games, will process in the opening ceremonies and they will pledge their honour to uphold the values of fair play and honest competition. Once again, those somewhat simple but inspiring acts will reinforce the scope and power of the Olympic movement and, for the first time, link athletes of the twenty-first century with those of ancient Greece. The Salt Lake Organizing Committee and all those concerned, including over 27,000 volunteers in Utah, are promising to do their best to ensure the success of this world festival of winter sport.

Building on the traditions established by the International Olympic Committee, my country, as host of the next Games, today introduces in plenary draft resolution A/56/L.47, "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We appreciate the fact that this Olympic relay team has 161 sponsors. I should like to read out the names of the countries that have been added to the list of sponsors since yesterday: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Grenada, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Building upon the Assembly's support for this initiative began in 1993. The United Nations and the International Olympic Committee have launched joint projects in such fields as development, humanitarian assistance, health promotion, education, women, eradication of poverty and the fights against HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. For example, the Olympic Solidarity Fund established by the International Olympic Committee will spend over $200 million between 2001 and 2004 for the development of sport scholarships for underprivileged athletes in developing countries. The World Anti-Doping Agency was initiated by the International Olympic Committee and is composed of government representatives and sport movement leaders.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General hosted the recently established International Olympic Truce Foundation last May at Headquarters so as to promote continued cooperation. I am pleased to recall that the United States Senate subsequently passed a resolution supporting the purposes of that Foundation and that Mr. Han Seung-soo, in his capacity as President of the Assembly, is a member of its voluntary Board of Directors.

Let me close by expressing my sincere thanks to the International Olympic Committee for organizing a world conference on sport and Olympic volunteerism last month in New York City as a gesture of solidarity in the framework of the United Nations current International Year of Volunteers. As the 27,000 volunteers in Salt Lake will demonstrate in a few weeks, the Olympic movement happens only because of the spirit of volunteerism and goodwill. In that same goodwill, my delegation today welcomes the opportunity before this great gathering to draw the world's attention to the tradition of the Olympic Truce on the eve of the Games. Therefore, on behalf of the host country of both these Games and of the United Nations, the United States looks forward to welcoming the athletes of the world for the XIX Olympic Winter Games.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Olympic spirit, initiated more than 2,000 years ago, is a distillation of humanity's effort to seek self-development and fulfilment. Over this long period, the Olympic ideal has gradually developed into a symbol

of mankind's aspiration for and pursuit of a peaceful and better world, encouraging us to overcome difficulties and to achieve progress upon progress.

Despite the two tragic World Wars, people's aspiration for peace and their pursuit of the Olympic ideal have never wavered since Mr. Pierre de Coubertin initiated the modern Olympic games at the end of the nineteenth century. The establishment of the United Nations, the purposes and principles of its Charter, and the efforts it has made to achieve world peace and common economic development have also contributed in no small way to promoting the development of the Olympic Games.

Today mankind has already stepped into the twenty-first century. The nations of the world should continue to adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, vigorously promote the Olympic spirit, seek peaceful solutions to international disputes and regional conflicts, enhance understanding and friendship among civilizations through dialogue and exchange, and work for continuous, global, social and economic development through cooperation. Whether they live in the East or the West, the North or the South, the common aspiration of people all over the world today is that the twenty-first century will be a new century marked by human development and progress.

The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September constituted a fundamental violation of the Olympic ideal as well as a serious challenge to human civilization. The international community should strengthen its cooperation against terrorism, fight it in all its forms and strive to eradicate its roots.

The nineteenth Winter Olympic Games will be held at Salt Lake City in the United States in February next year. The host country and the International Olympic Committee have carried out much careful and thoughtful preparatory work in this regard. We hope that the international community can work together to ensure that the Games will be a complete success.

On 13 July this year, the city of Beijing was awarded the opportunity to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. The world has seen the love and respect of the ancient Oriental civilization for the Olympic spirit as well as its aspiration for and pursuit of world peace, friendship and development. Once again we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to friends from countries around the world, as well as the International Olympic Committee, for having supported us in this effort. We believe that holding the Olympic Games in China, a country with a 5,000-year history, will not only represent the world's full recognition of China's great achievements since its reform and opening-up policy, but also provide a good opportunity for exchange between Oriental and Occidental civilizations. China will prove through real action that Beijing can give the world an outstanding Olympic Games.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): Every two years since the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 1993, the Principality of Monaco has participated with interest in the debate on the item "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

We are particularly interested in the debate this year because of the excellent report of the Secretary-General, which encourages the work carried out by the Organization in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee, and also because of the final and very instructive report on the Olympic movement, which stresses the many interesting and important initiatives taken by the Committee itself and by National Committees with regard to the item now before us.

Reading the two reports makes us more aware of the irreplaceable role of sporting events in bringing people together and in fostering greater understanding among young people who sometimes come from vastly different and far-flung corners of the world. Last year, the International Olympic Committee organized six round tables — in Athens, Nairobi, San José, Lomé, Singapore and Rome — on the topic of sport for a culture of peace and respect for the Olympic Truce. The meetings brought together members of the National Olympic Committees, including representatives of countries in conflict and United Nations experts. The meetings were edifying and their conclusions very encouraging. We noted, for example, a real desire to promote the spirit of fair play, tolerance and solidarity at all levels in sporting competitions.

Since 1968 Monaco has been the headquarters for the International Association for Non-Violent Sport, which encourages the strengthening of sport's educative and cultural functions as well as promoting the fight against drug abuse, chauvinism and cheating, all of which are deeply contrary to the Olympic spirit.

It is important to emphasize some of the many useful recommendations made at the round tables, some of which are directed specifically at United Nations programmes and specialized agencies. They call for greater support for the development of sport through social and community projects to help young people and those in rural areas. We urge follow-up on these recommendations.

In this spirit, the Principality of Monaco decided to make a bilateral financial contribution for the construction of sport stadiums in the Republic of El Salvador, with a view to the upcoming Central American Games. After the work is done, the stadiums will be available to schools and social and community organizations for young people in difficult circumstances. We welcome the many activities organized for the International Year for the Culture of Peace by the International Olympic Committee, the Organization of African Unity and many National Olympic Committees. These activities show clearly that there is a lively interest throughout the world in promoting peace and the Olympic ideal. This is very encouraging and gives us hope for the future.

Sporting activities certainly contribute to building a better organized and more peaceful world at the collective and individual levels. This was a point made by the Nobel Committee when it announced that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001 would go to the United Nations and its Secretary-General; the award ceremony took place yesterday. On behalf of the highest authorities and the people of Monaco, I would like to encourage and warmly congratulate the two laureates. We believe that the combined choice of the Organization and the Secretary-General shows without a doubt that the integration of the collective and the individual is absolutely fundamental to success in all human endeavours. Sports are certainly one of the most noteworthy, strongest and most convincing symbols of this essential duality.

On behalf of our Government, our athletes and our sports figures, I would like to commend the exceptional performance of Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, who retired this summer as President of the International Olympic Committee. He led the movement from success to success for many years and is widely recognized throughout the world.

We believe that Mr. Samaranch's successor, Mr. Jacques Rogge, who was elected in Moscow last July as President of the International Olympic Committee, will be able to take over very successfully from his predecessor. The entire sporting world knows him well and has without hesitation placed its total faith in him. He has certainly abundantly deserved that trust. We wish him every success and take this opportunity to assure him of the cooperation of the Principality of Monaco and its leaders in successfully carrying out his very important task.

At the twelfth Sportel, the international encounter of sports and television recently held in Monaco, we had an opportunity to welcome Mr. Rogge. We also welcomed him to Monaco last 13 November, when we hosted the General Assembly of the European Olympic Committee. Monaco's leaders and its entire population greatly appreciated his visit.

The Principality of Monaco is a country where sports are very highly regarded. The Government devotes significant resources to promoting physical education and sporting activities, beginning by involving young people in school athletics and, of course, in extra-curricular sports. In addition, there are many major international sporting events in Monaco, such as the Formula One Grand Prix, the Monte Carlo Automobile Rally, tennis tournaments and the Herculis, which is an annual event that brings together the best athletes from numerous sporting realms to take part in various events, including sailing — both motorized and wind-sailing — golf and swimming, as well as soccer, handball, volley ball and even pétanque.

Some of those events have a humanitarian aspect, such as the one that took place last 3 October on the initiative of Mr. Mike Powers, organizer of the Big 3 Records Golf Tournament. The Tournament had been cancelled because it was to be held just after the 11 September tragedy — which took place exactly three months ago today. The Tournament was turned into charity event that raised a large sum of money at an auction for the families of the firefighters, police officers and rescue workers of the City of New York who were victims of that attack. His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Chairman of the delegation of Monaco to the General Assembly and a member of the International Olympic Committee, handed the proceeds over to the Mayor of New York on 23 October.

Moreover, numerous friendly sporting events are held every year in Monaco whose proceeds go to charities or charitable works. In this regard, and in

response to the appeal made by President Bush, I wish to say that tribute is paying paid today in Monaco to the memory of the victims of that horrible attack. The national anthems of the United States and Monaco will be played at that ceremony of prayer and remembrance. Likewise, in recalling such a terrible and brutal attack, we cannot fail to remember that terrorism has also taken a heavy toll on the Olympic Movement, namely, at the sadly recalled Munich Olympics.

As we all know, in a few weeks' time the United States will host the nineteenth Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City. We hope that the games, which will be held in the wounded land of America, will be a historic success. On that occasion, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Secretary-General, persons associated with the President of the International Olympic Committee, and many other world personalities will launch a universal appeal for respect for the Olympic Truce. We wholeheartedly support that appeal.

We firmly believe that today, when new causes of concern for the international community are joining the many age-old conflicts, the joint initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee — which has been renewed every two years for 28 years now — represents an opportunity for those involved in conflict to talk, to begin or relaunch dialogue, and to reject sterile distrust of one another. Just a few weeks' respite in fighting have often been used to begin neutral, balanced humanitarian involvement to enable envoys to meet with belligerents to try to find solutions to their disputes. The delegation of Monaco fully supports and co-sponsors the draft resolution introduced by the delegation of the United States on this matter.

At the Millennium Summit, our heads of State and Government, or their high-level representatives, adopted a major moral and ethical Declaration of great significance in which they called on all Member States, individually and collectively, to observe the Olympic Truce now and in the future and to support the efforts of the International Olympic Committee to promote peace and understanding among people.

The new millennium, which so many men and women had hoped would be one of peace and conviviality, is today one of doubt and pessimism. If doubt is a tribute to hope, then the pessimism to which everything today leads us is but a fleeting feeling, a feeling that could be wiped out by a little spark of hope. The Olympic Truce decreed for the nineteenth Winter Games can be that spark of hope. We must believe that, and it should fill us with optimism and hope.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I would like, at the outset, to express the satisfaction of my delegation at the great number of countries that have sponsored the present draft resolution. This is a clear message of the importance that the international community places on the Olympic ideal. The great challenge now is to take the first practical steps towards turning the observance of the Olympic Truce into a reality.

The Olympic ideal and Truce are expressions of the yearning of mankind for peace, understanding and reconciliation, and for the noble notion of distinction based on honest competition. In the search for excellence every athlete is equal, and victory is the result of ability, training, hard work and perseverance. Discrimination with regard to a country or a person on the grounds of race, religion, politics, sex or otherwise is incompatible with the Olympic spirit. It is important to strengthen adherence to Olympic ethics, especially the need to conduct the Games in a fair way. In that context, the efforts against the use of prohibited anabolic and other drugs are to be commended.

Since its independence, Cyprus, a small country, has followed an active foreign policy based on the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which coincide with, and fully adhere to, the Olympic ideal. It is now ever more imperative that the spirit of freedom and tolerance, as exemplified by the very essence of the Olympic ideal, be greatly disseminated through the planet; for in these turbulent times following the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September, humanity should look to the idea of the Olympic spirit and the Olympic Truce as an alternative to war, destruction and the assault on civilization, which is the goal of terrorism.

The latest manifestation of our determination to become a bridge of peace in our sensitive region in the Eastern Mediterranean, and a homeland of harmony and understanding for all communities living on the island, is the proposal of President Clerides for the demilitarization of Cyprus. On this solemn occasion, we renew our appeal for the acceptance of this proposal and express our hope for a just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions, so that

Cyprus can participate in the next Olympics as a reunited and peaceful State, with a team that will include the best Cypriot athletes, irrespective of their background.

The people of Cyprus were immensely satisfied with the decision of the International Olympic Committee concerning the hosting of the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece, the birthplace of the Olympic movement, and we are particularly pleased at the quick pace of preparations for their realization. We look forward to a successful Athens 2004 and are certain that the Olympic ideal will be fulfilled, thus opening a new chapter in the history of the Olympic movement. We also wish every success to the Winter Games in Salt Lake City and express our appreciation to the Organizing Committee.

I would like in conclusion to express our appreciation for the great efforts of the International Olympic Committee to imbue youth with these ideals, which are the guarantee of a better and more humane world.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): The Government of Israel is proud to lend its support to the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

Israel is of the view that athletic competition, undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect, fairness, and good sportsmanship, is an ideal way to foster goodwill and good relations between peoples. The values of sports are international values that transcend national boundaries and provide a medium through which diverse peoples can interact and promote greater understanding of one another.

The Olympic Games, as the world's premier sporting event, have long been one of the primary meeting points for nations divided by politics or geography. In this respect we support the observance of the Olympic Truce as an expression of our common yearning for peace and reconciliation, and we hope that all Member States will join together in ensuring that peace and security prevail for the duration of the Games.

In our own region we have tried to harness the power of sport to forge relationships and build bridges across the dark waters of conflict. We hope that these types of competitions will continue to develop and expand in future.

Israel has a long history of involvement in international athletic competition. Every four years, thousands of athletes from all over the world converge on the State of Israel for the Maccabiah Games, which bear the name and spirit of the Maccabim, whose heritage the Jewish people celebrate at this time, during Hanukkah, the festival of light. This quadrennial event, which dates back to 1932, embodies the best of Jewish culture and athletics and is an unforgettable experience for participants and spectators alike.

For the people of Israel, the idea of the Olympic Games cannot be separated from the memory of the horrific act of terrorist murder that tarnished the 1972 Munich Games. At those Games, gunmen from the terrorist group Black September broke into the Olympic Village disguised as athletes and killed 11 Israeli athletes and coaches.

This disgraceful act of terrorism and murder is unprecedented in the annals of Olympic history and is the very antithesis of the Olympic ideal. Rather than transcending politics and conflict, the Games were used as a vehicle for the expression of hatred and the perpetration of murder. This blemish on the history of the Games must not be forgotten as we strive to ensure that future Olympic events serve to broaden understanding, tolerance, respect and peace.

Israel reaffirms its support for the noble objectives of this draft resolution and for the observance of the Olympic Truce. The Olympic Games is one of the world's only truly global events and, as such, presents us with an extraordinary opportunity to focus the world's attention and utilize the goodwill that the Games inspire to build a more peaceful and more harmonious world.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on the draft resolution presented today in the plenary under agenda item 23, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

The draft resolution, introduced by the United States, the country hosting the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, calls on all Member States to promote the Olympic ideal, to observe the Olympic Truce and to revive the ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheiria*, which dates back to the ninth century BC

The term *ekecheiria*, which in ancient Greek literally means "holding hands", indicates the

suspension of hostilities and the creation of appropriate conditions to allow athletes participating in the Olympic Games, as well as their relatives and thousands of ordinary pilgrims, to travel, unobstructed by fear, to attend the legendary Games in peace, and then return to their hometowns in safety and security.

The purpose of the Olympic Truce movement is more far-reaching. It could become a positive factor in international rapprochement and a useful tool for diplomacy. In every nation and society, culture and religion, the Olympic Games are recognized as the major sporting event of our world, a unique sports and cultural festivity that should promote the values we wish to cherish in our global village.

In this context, we welcome the common declaration of Pope John Paul II and His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece:

> "We are pleased to add our voice to the many voices around the world which have expressed the hope that, on the occasion of the Olympic Games to be held in Greece in the year 2004, the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce will be revived, according to which all wars had to stop, and terrorism and violence had to cease."

Let me remind the Assembly that the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted in New York in September 2000 by more than 150 heads of State and Government, included a paragraph on the promotion of peace and mutual comprehension of the Olympic Truce.

In July 2000, International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch and the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. George Papandreou, inaugurated the Athens International Olympic Truce Centre. The Centre, in full compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions, is an ambitious undertaking by the International Olympic Committee, in cooperation with the Greek Government, to promote an international ceasefire during the Olympics, thus allowing the building of bridges among rivals.

Greece will have the distinct honour of hosting the 2004 Summer Olympics. The return of the Olympic Games in 2004 to Greece, their ancient home, more than a century after their revival in 1896, provides an opportunity to enrich the modern Olympics by restoring some of the forgotten ideals of ancient Greece. Our endeavours aspire to refocus on the athlete as the centre of our attention and the measure of our success. In a contemporary manner, we aim to organize, in the most efficient and secure way, the 2004 Olympic Games in the authentic traditions and with the original values embodied in the Olympic ideal.

Furthermore, we aspire to promote a cultural Olympiad — a cultural event of a global scale that is designed to link sport with culture and hopes to send a strong message for a culture of civilizations, in order to act as a platform for universal cooperation.

In our bid, we pledged to help the revival of the Olympic Truce, which in our times would serve to promote dialogue, reconciliation and the search for durable solutions to conflicts around the world. In no other year could this message be more timely. We aim to emphasize the importance of the issues of dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding, respect and cooperation between cultures, religions and civilizations. This is our everyday challenge under the Charter of the United Nations: to promote those issues that unite us and to practise dialogue on those who stand between us. We need to open ways of communication and to promote dialogue among those who do not already practise it.

I would like to express our appreciation to the mission of the United States for introducing this draft resolution and to extend our heartfelt thanks to the delegations that sponsored it. The message of peace and reconciliation originating in this draft resolution will give us, I am sure, hope and vision towards our common goals.

Mr. Requiejo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sport and the Olympic ideal undoubtedly contribute to better understanding and mutual comprehension, as well as to the development and strengthening of friendship and fraternity among peoples, which are indispensable to the promotion of peace, cooperation among nations and the harmonious development of mankind.

In this respect, we attach special importance to the observance of the Olympic Truce for the cessation of all hostilities during the Olympic Games and to the search, through diplomatic solutions, for a peaceful settlement of international disputes, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This is the basis for the creation, through sport and the Olympic ideal, of a better world in which peace

prevails. However, there are many factors today that run counter to that objective.

The growing negative effects of neoliberal globalization can also be felt today in the area of sport, where the gap between rich and poor has widened. One figure suffices to confirm that inequality: in the most recent Olympic Games, held in 2000, a mere seven countries from the first world took 50 per cent of the medals to be won.

We are not surprised by this, since sport requires the financial resources to create the infrastructure necessary to its development and since the developing countries do not have such resources. The meagre resources available to them today must be allocated to the eradication of poverty, hunger, poor health conditions and many other problems that violate the most fundamental human rights: the right to life and the right to development.

Furthermore, it is regrettable that some of those medals are won by talented athletes from countries that have hardly any sports installations and trainers or resources for the development of sport and that many of these athletes have no alternative but to take the path of professional and profit-making sport and to compete under other flags. The delegation of Cuba denounces this practice, which, unfortunately, is growing day by day. At the same time, we call on the international sports federations to take the measures necessary to curb the buying and selling of sporting talents, which corrupt and tarnish the purity of sport and damage the Olympic ideal that we wish to promote. It is also necessary to encourage the honesty and impartiality of sports officials and judges and to deem any case of corruption to be a grave offence against the Olympic spirit.

Another violation of the Olympic ideal is represented by the colossal sums of money that today surround the competition to host Olympic Games and, essentially, to organize Olympiads. Hosting the Olympics must also be a right enjoyed by the poor countries and not the exclusive monopoly of the super-rich. In that respect, Cuba reiterates its aspiration to host some Olympic Games in the near future. Our sporting record justifies that aspiration.

Our small country, in spite of the criminal blockade that has been imposed on us for 42 years by the United States, has begun this century with thousands of sports installations used by 1.5 million citizens systematically practising sports or physical exercise under specialist guidance: by over 2 million children, teenagers and young students with physical education and sports teachers; and by men and women of the third age, pregnant women and other categories of citizens for whom sport or physical exercise means health and longer life.

In Cuba, the teaching of sport is free of charge, making a reality of our aspiration of guaranteeing sport as a right of the people. Cuba is also working to strengthen sport in the countries of the third world, as demonstrated in the inauguration this year of the International School of Physical Education and Sport in Havana, where young people from over 50 countries of the South are studying today to graduate as qualified professionals in various branches of sport. We are also pleased to affirm that almost 8,000 sports specialists and trainers from Cuba have provided services in dozens of countries whose athletes have on occasion competed with and won competitions against our own athletes.

The delegation of Cuba joins in the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" because we consider it to be an acceptable and useful text whose contents we entirely support and endorse. However, the Cuban delegation is not a sponsor, as it has been in the past, because we believe that, although it is a positive text, it represents a step backward from resolution 54/34, adopted by consensus with the same objective in 1999.

As Cuba sees it, the Olympic Truce calls "for all hostilities to cease during the Games", as affirmed in the second preambular paragraph of that resolution. This indispensable concept has been eliminated from the draft resolution now before the General Assembly.

The Cuban delegation also regrets the elimination of the contents of operative paragraph 2 of resolution 54/34, in which Member States are urged

> "to take the initiative to abide by the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, and to pursue, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the peaceful settlement of all international conflicts through diplomatic solutions".

This concept is extremely important in a world in which international conflicts are proliferating and in which peace is increasingly threatened.

As President Fidel Castro has said, sport represents well-being, quality of life, health, happiness and honour for peoples, and is perhaps the most efficient instrument to combat criminal tendencies, drugs and the many other vices that afflict modern societies.

Globalization in the area of sport must be the globalization of cooperation, respect and equity, not the globalization of injustices and inequalities. On that basis, we will be able to advance towards the true Olympic ideal.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus welcomes the draft resolution introduced by the United States under the item "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Debate on this topic in the General Assembly is a unique opportunity for the United Nations to use the full potential of the international community in maintaining international peace and security by mobilizing sport's resources to achieve its main goal — saving current and succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

From ancient times, sport and the Olympic ideal have been an inherent part of peace and progress. We are convinced that this age-old tradition must be preserved and strengthened in the twenty-first century. The Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000 by our heads of State and Government, set forth clearly the following goal:

> "to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic Ideal". (*resolution 55/2, para. 10*)

In this context, the Republic of Belarus supports coordination by the International Olympic Committee and the Secretary-General's Adviser on Sports for Development and Peace so that sport can be used to reconcile communities in conflict or post-conflict situations, and can be considered an integral part of the general process of economic and social development and the promotion of the culture of peace and harmony, particularly among young people. All United Nations programmes focused on this goal will receive the Belarus Government's full support and cooperation.

Belarus, which recently became a fully integrated member of the international community, views the social function of sports and physical culture as an integral part of the process of creating our nation's statehood. We also see it as a means of maintaining friendly relations and partnerships with all other countries of the world. Sport and physical culture are one of the main policy priorities of Belarus, because they help solve social problems, particularly in providing health care for children, teenagers, students and all other citizens of our country.

Belarus has a well-established sports infrastructure comprising 225 stadiums, 24 sports centres, 222 swimming pools, 4,687 sports clubs, many Olympic training centres, sports palaces, tennis courts, ice-sport palaces and more than 9,000 open sports courts. Belarus is a small country, but many of our people practise sports of all kinds, with nearly 8 per cent of our overall population involved in some sport.

During the 1997-2000 Olympic cycle, sports teams from Belarus won 247 Olympic medals, including 53 gold medals. At the XXVII Olympic Games, in Sydney, Belarus won 3 gold, 3 silver and 11 bronze medals, ranking fifteenth among all teams participating in the Games. The Belarus gymnastics team won a gold medal in the recent World Championships in Brussels, Belgium.

Belarus is currently a member of the Committee for the Development of Sport of the Council of Europe and the Executive Committee of the European Sports Conference, and was elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The members of our National Olympic Committee represent Belarus in the European Olympic Committees Association, the European Non-Governmental Sports Organization and the National Olympic Committees Association of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Recently, the Republic of Belarus initiated the adoption of recommendations to facilitate a visa regime for sport delegations, including the idea of participation in large-scale sporting events in Europe on a non-visa basis. Following a UNESCO initiative, Belarus has put forth a recommendation on the topic "Physical education and sports as a means of social

development". In addition, since Belarus is active in the fields of physical culture, sport and the drafting of relevant legislation, we have in place the necessary framework for the establishment of our national physical education and sports regime.

The global challenges and threats facing humankind today require a global and comprehensive response. We must explore all means available to the international community to achieve peace, and sport is a powerful means of helping us towards that goal. The Olympic Games in Sydney, at the threshold of the new millennium, reaffirmed the very close interdependence between sports and peace, which is of particular importance for us today and in the future. The Republic of Belarus will do its utmost to strengthen this relationship.

Ms. Vassallo (Malta): It is an honour for my delegation to address the Assembly on agenda item 23, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the United States for introducing this year's draft resolution as host of the 2002 Winter Olympics, to be held in Salt Lake City. In reaffirming our support for the spirit of this draft resolution, we acknowledge with pleasure the high number of sponsorships it has received.

Apart from being a spectacle of competitive sport, skill and stamina, the Olympic Games are rich in symbolic significance that is as relevant today as it was centuries ago in ancient Greece. Let us recall that the Games owe their origins to a treaty which gave rise to the concept of the sacred truce, under which conflicts in the Greek world came to a halt throughout the duration of the Games.

In accordance with the Millennium Declaration, my delegation invites Member States

> "to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal". (ibid.)

The Olympic Games might be considered a diplomatic tool which enhances the efforts of the United Nations in the promotion of peace. The Games involve the same search as that of the Organization — for cooperation, understanding and fruitful interaction — which leads to dialogue and initiatives on a large number of issues. Gone are the days when countries believed, for whatever reason, that they had to boycott the Games. Today, all countries participate and compete side by side. It was gratifying to watch the athletes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea marching together during the Australian Games in 2000.

My delegation firmly believes that sport plays a definite, interactive role in the promotion of a better and more peaceful world. Interaction among athletes leads to enhanced understanding among cultures and the promotion of healthy lifestyles in younger generations, as well as the broader realization of the Olympic ideal.

My delegation is heartened by the joint endeavours which have emerged between the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations.

The organization of the Games further emphasizes the significance of addressing issues of development, the protection of the environment, education, the eradication of poverty and the fight against HIV/AIDS, as well as the fight against drug abuse, violence and juvenile delinquency, all of which feature on the United Nations agenda.

The Olympic Games present younger generations with role models who promote healthy lifestyles. Some athletes are representatives of ethnic minorities; their participation is an important step towards the acceptance of ethnic minorities and the acknowledgement of their contribution to their countries. The participation of these athletes goes beyond physical strength and performance; it also symbolizes courage and the intrinsic universal value of all peoples and all cultures.

The Olympic Truce basically signifies the cessation of belligerence among countries and peoples in armed conflict for at least the duration of the Games. The United Nations has the obligation of furthering this concept, leading to a more proactive stance. Through the promotion of a better understanding among nations, the international community can contribute towards the elimination of the scourge of war.

The Olympic Games promote a culture of peace. In this respect, my country's Olympic Committee

prides itself on being involved in the mobilization of all international sports organizations and National Olympic Committees to undertake concrete actions at the local, national and global levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce.

Participation is not about winning medals; winning is not everything. Although competition by nature generates a degree of thirst for success, the notion of having contributed towards the building of a peaceful world far transcends any other consideration.

It is my delegation's belief that each and every athlete, successful or otherwise, can look at his or her participation with the satisfaction of having contributed to the creation of a better world. In conclusion, my delegation would like to express the wish that the journey of the Olympic flame may serve as a beacon for the human race in its quest for good will and peace.

Ms. Crowley (Australia): Australia is pleased to support the draft resolution and its principal call to all Member States to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal and by putting the Olympic Truce into effect during the period of the Games.

It is sobering to note right now that there are many places of conflict around the world where the principles being expressed in this draft resolution have no opportunity to be effective. Equally importantly, we support the draft resolution's affirmation of the principles of international friendship and cooperation, and the important role the Olympics, and sport more broadly, can play in helping to foster healthy, productive and peaceful communities beyond the limits of the Olympic Games.

Australia is an active and committed member of the Olympic movement. We are one of only two nations to have competed in every modern summer Olympiad. We have also proudly played host to the Summer Olympic Games twice: in Melbourne in 1956, and in Sydney in 2000.

Growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s, I well remember the pride and excitement our city and nation felt in hosting the XIV Olympic Games. In many respects, those Games helped bring the world to Australia and Australia to the world — important at a time when we had been accepting migrants from many nations. Those Olympics were an important event in our nation's life, and a peaceful event in a hard year. The Melbourne Games came to be known as the "friendly Games", due to the inspiration of a young Chinese man — a student, I think — who wrote to the Organizing Committee suggesting that athletes walk together under the flag of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the closing ceremony, as a symbol and example of international good will. That practice has become a part of all the Games since, and it continues.

Similarly, we Australians took great pride in the success of the XXVII Games in Sydney in 2000 — in terms not only of numbers, but of the many memorable moments: South Korea and North Korea entering the stadium under one banner in the opening ceremony to the roar of support from 110,000 spectators; four athletes from East Timor participating for the first time under the Olympic flag; Cathy Freeman, an aboriginal Australian, lighting the torch to start the Games.

The 2000 Games also witnessed the largest participation of volunteers in Olympic history. Many of those volunteers stayed on to assist with the subsequent Paralympic Games. Their involvement, just as much as that of the athletes and officials, best captured the Olympic spirit of good will, understanding and friendship, and certainly the spirit of Australia. Our volunteers also had a great sense of humour, and left people laughing, even if they did not quite understand Australian humour. Many objective assessments claim that the Australian Olympics in Sydney in 2000 were the best Games ever.

The Olympics are very important for other reasons. First, the Games are a major exercise in building capacity for the host country, from physical infrastructure to broad cultural activities. Secondly, people come from around the world to see sporting excellence and, at the same time, participate in the host country's society, activities and culture. The Olympic ideals must necessarily extend to cover all these opportunities. Many have commented, as I said earlier, that Australia did this brilliantly, from the opening to the closing ceremony. Australia smiled and Sydney sparkled.

A third point relates to the way the Olympic Games are reported. Television now provides the main coverage, and it is disappointing to learn that many nations give small or uneven coverage to the Games, sometimes featuring only their own athletes. The

Olympics are about international excellence rather than nationality, and this draft resolution reflects that.

I would like to speak briefly about other important aspects of this draft resolution: its affirmation of some of the underlying principles that the United Nations and the international Olympic movement share, and the role that sports can play in helping to build stronger communities — for example through youth education and exchange.

Australia has a long commitment to international sports development programmes through partnerships with Governments, sporting agencies and the IOC. Many of these programmes have received special recognition from the IOC and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

We have been particularly active in assisting countries in the Asia-Pacific region with sports development programmes. The focus of these activities has been on capacity-building in the areas of physical education, youth development and sports management. We see tremendous scope for the IOC to expand its work in these areas, and to find new ways to complement the activities of the United Nations and, indeed, Member State Governments, in the areas of health, development and education.

Australia has recognized the importance of providing opportunity for young people, which allows the growth of decision-making, confidence-building and capacity to learn, as well as physical skills development. Our programmes are directed towards achieving wide community participation as well as excellence in elite athletes.

While United Nations principles and activities are well reflected in this draft resolution, it is very important that the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games themselves be used to put these principles into practice — for example, with regard to non-discrimination in bringing sporting opportunity to women as well as men. We can note that Olympic villages have become places where lasting friendships are built and no one is discriminated against because of race or religion.

The Olympics are a young people's forum par excellence. Their skills, training, hard work and dedication, their sacrifices for their sport, their pride in representing their nation, their coping with disappointment, their celebrating of other contestants are some of the vital ingredients in this draft resolution. We who are older, we whom age is wearying, must learn from our young people and provide them with the necessary support. They are the future, and we must accept the challenge of this draft resolution to leave them a better world.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): On behalf of the member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I have the honour to speak on agenda item 23, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

When the International Olympic Committee was faced with political problems and launched its appeal in 1992 for an Olympic Truce, requesting support from the Member States of the United Nations and political entities, the Organization of African Unity was among the first to respond to the appeal. That was supported by the fifty-eighth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in June 1993, in Cairo, Egypt, and was endorsed by the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

Furthermore, in that connection, Egypt, in its capacity as the Chair of the OAU for the year 1993, introduced two draft resolutions in the General Assembly, on 25 October 1993. The first was on the Olympic Truce. The other was on the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, in commemoration of the centenary of the International Olympic Committee, which was founded in 1894. The fact that those draft resolutions were sponsored by 121 Member States was an indication of the overwhelming support the Olympics enjoyed from the international community. I am delighted to express once again, on behalf of the African countries, our support for the Olympic Truce.

As the Assembly may recall, the Millennium Summit of the heads of State and Government, held in New York in September 2000, included in its final Declaration the following paragraph:

> "We urge Member States to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic Ideal." (*resolution 55/2, para. 10*)

The International Olympic Committee has also cooperated very effectively with the General Assembly by organizing round tables for the National Olympic Committees whose countries were, or are still, in conflict situations in Africa, in the framework of the International Year of the Culture of Peace. Zambia was among the countries represented at the World Conference on Olympic and Sport Volunteerism, organized by the International Olympic Committee only last month in New York in the framework of the International Year of Volunteers.

Since 1993, the General Assembly has adopted by consensus three additional resolutions on the Olympic Truce, introduced by the countries hosting the Olympic Games. As a matter of fact, the resolution introduced by Australia and adopted in 1999 had 180 sponsors, a record in the Assembly's history.

It is therefore against that background that I request that this draft resolution on the Olympic Truce, introduced by the United States of America as the host of the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City in February 2002, be adopted by consensus.

I believe that it is our duty to promote peace and human understanding for the well-being of society by encouraging observance of the Olympic Truce. This is in conformity with past resolutions of the General Assembly to pursue the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Finally, I would like to commend the International Olympic Committee on its efforts to mobilize the youth of the world in the cause of peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.47.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors: Bahrain, Canada, Comoros, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Suriname, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.47?

Draft resolution A/56/L.47 was adopted (resolution 56/75).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 23.

Agenda item 35 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/499 and A/56/611)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.46)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Benin to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.46.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/56/L.46 under agenda item 35, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The Assembly will recall that from 4 to 6 December 2000, the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Cotonou, Benin. A total of 111 Government delegations attended, along with about 50 non-governmental organizations. The fact that the Conference was so well attended is clear evidence of the interest that States attach to democracy and to its consolidation, and attests also to the aspiration of all peoples to an international order that is based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the promotion of the rule of law, respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, and social progress.

Bearing in mind that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, development and democracy are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, draft resolution A/56/L.46 encourages Member States to identify all possible steps to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies and calls on the Secretary-General to examine options for strengthening the efforts of Member States to consolidate democracy, including the designation of a focal point.

The sponsors of the draft resolution also commend the Republic of Mongolia for its decision to

host the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2003. We would also like to note that Yemen has stated its intention to host one of the conferences on new or restored democracies.

The draft resolution before us is the outcome of constructive and fruitful negotiations. That is why I should like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all of those delegations that, in a positive and constructive manner, helped in its elaboration. The draft resolution was later sponsored by 114 delegations.

Since draft resolution A/56/L.46 was issued, the following States have stated that they wish to become sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, El Salvador, the Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), the Netherlands, the Niger, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, the Seychelles, Slovakia, Sweden, Thailand, the former Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom and the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

Since there are so many sponsors, I am convinced that draft resolution A/56/L.46 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Area country belonging to the European Economic Area — Iceland — align themselves with this statement.

May I at the outset reiterate the European Union's warmest congratulations to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. We listened very attentively to the address by the Secretary-General on the occasion of the official awards ceremony for this prestigious Prize, which was held in Oslo yesterday. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the promotion of democracy was one of the priorities that should characterize the work of the United Nations at the beginning of this millennium. The European Union fully shares that vision and will give its complete support to the Secretary-General in its achievement.

There have thus far been four meetings of the International Conference on New or Restored Democracies. The fourth was held last year in Cotonou, Benin — the first Conference of its kind to be hosted on the African continent. It was also the first time that all of the States Members of the United Nations had been invited to the Conference. The Cotonou Conference showed that there is growing support for strengthening democracy in all parts of the world. Those who participated in the Conference reaffirmed that the will of the people is the basis for the authority of Governments and that this will must be expressed in the form of free, fair, pluralistic, orderly and transparent elections. The participants also condemned all anti-democratic forms of acceding to, and staying in, power. Moreover, they recognized that development and the eradication of poverty were factors that promoted and preserved the development of democracy.

The Cotonou Declaration, adopted at the end of the Conference, contains recommendations, including the designation by the Secretary-General of a coordination focal point within the United Nations system. The purpose of this focal point will be to support the efforts of Member States to consolidate democracy and assist the mechanism for follow-up of the Fourth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies. Given its universal scope and its experience, and through its multifaceted programmes and activities, the United Nations can play a major part in promoting democracy. It is for this reason that the European Union is supporting such an initiative.

Democracy is not only a universally recognized ideal and objective but also a fundamental right of citizens. The process of democracy is not limited to the holding of elections. Any democratic system must also offer the people — men and women equally — the possibility of participating fully and effectively in all aspects of society. The strengthening of civil society is an integral part of democracy.

Democracy is first and foremost the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as enshrined in international instruments. Tolerance and respect of

diversity, the fight against all forms of discrimination, and equality between men and women are also fundamental elements of democracy.

Democracy and the rule of law are inseparable. Measures that foster the creation of the rule of law — such as by promoting good governance; adopting and applying laws, procedures and mechanisms that guarantee representation and accountability and that protect individuals and groups of individuals from arbitrariness and injustice; guaranteeing an independent judiciary; and training State officials — are extremely important factors in bolstering and consolidating democracy.

Democracy is undeniably linked to sustainable development. Democratization seeks to offer a wider choice to the population and helps to create a socio-economic environment that encourages development.

The European Union supports and will continue to support the efforts of States involved in the process of democratization. Consolidating democracy is one of the key objectives of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the European Community's cooperation policy. Through its cooperation programmes, the European Union supports third States to assist democratization in numerous areas: the strengthening of the rule of law, in particular in the field of justice; the effective participation of the population; the strengthening of civil society; and the development of a human rights culture. Support for elections also represents a considerable share of the European Union's overall contribution towards democratization and sustainable development in third countries.

As an ever-growing number of countries commit themselves to democracy, community aid for supporting the transition also increases. The main part of the appropriations committed, nearing 180 million euros over the last five years, goes to supporting the holding and observing of elections. Since the publication of the Commission Communication on EU election assistance and observation in April 2000, European Union policy on elections has become more coherent and homogenous.

There is no pre-established and authoritative formula for democracy. There is more than one road to democracy; each country will get there via its own route and at its own pace. That does not mean, however, that States cannot learn from the experience of others. The United Nations continues to be the forum specially suited to exchanging information and best practices on the promotion and consolidation of democracy.

A democratic culture is the best safeguard against conflicts and terrorism, as it guarantees the peaceful and equitable settlement of disputes. Over the last decade, an increasing number of countries across the globe have adopted a democratic system. Even if some have abruptly reverted to autocracy or been plunged into civil or regional conflicts, we are optimistic, since countries in which the representatives of the people derive their authority from free, democratic and pluralistic elections are now in the majority in the world.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh attaches particular importance to this agenda item, for we believe that the United Nations can indeed play an effective role in the global democratization process. It can also assist in promoting and strengthening democracies across the globe. I wish to place on record our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/56/499. It provides a comprehensive overview of the efforts made by the United Nations system in this field.

My delegation commends the Governments of the Philippines, Nicaragua, Romania and Benin for organizing the last four International Conferences on New or Restored Democracies. The occasions provided unique opportunities for participating countries to exchange their views and experiences in the process of democratization. Over the years, this process has brought together countries from all continents; their traditions are varied, as are their quests for a democratic world. The Conference in Cotonou was the largest demonstration to date of the widening global trend towards strengthening and promoting the democratization process.

It is true that no system of governance can claim perfection, yet democracy is widely accepted as the best form of governance that has ever been known. Democracy upholds the rule of law, ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, makes Governments accountable to people and renders decision-making transparent. For us in Bangladesh, the experience of the past and the realities of the present demonstrate quite clearly that there is no alternative to

democracy if the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be maintained.

Democratization is a process of building democratic institutions that ensures good governance and the rule of law and respects human rights and political openness. Democracy requires the effective functioning of democratic institutions with accountability and transparency. The rule of law is obviously the most essential element of democracy. It protects individuals or groups against arbitrary behaviour, injustice or oppression by the State or other actors. However, the importance of a strong civil society and a human rights culture cannot be overemphasized in the consolidation of democracy. It is encouraging to note that the United Nations is playing an increasingly robust role in the area of governance and democratization.

Democracy and development are inseparable in the context of the present-day world. We believe that, without democracy, countries cannot achieve sustainable development. It is democratization that can help States effectively to address the problems and potentials of development in the new century. The United Nations can play a major proactive role in pushing ahead this process through its multifaceted programmes and activities.

There is, as we all know, no single uniform guaranteed model of democracy. Democratic institutions must be evolved from the inherent values of any particular society. They must reflect the culture, history and political experience of the people. On the other hand, the power of public authorities must be based on the support of the people expressed freely in periodic elections, without intimidation and conducted by universal suffrage. However, the orderly conduct of elections cannot mark the end of the process. A democratic system must also provide opportunities for people to participate fully in all aspects of their socio-political life. This explains the need to strengthen the democratic instruments that allow people to participate in shaping this societal consensus. The United Nations has a specific role to play in simultaneously promoting these principles and supporting the processes of democracy.

My delegation considers the promotion of democratic governance to be one of the most important long-term strategies for the prevention of armed conflict. A democracy that is rooted in a culture of tolerance and respect for diversity is the best safeguard against war and terrorism. Social exclusion, intolerance and unequal access to resources are often at the root of armed conflicts. We are happy to see that this issue received special attention at the Fourth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies. We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that peace be supported through social development, the emancipation of women and improvement in the flow of trade and financial resources to the developing countries. It is encouraging to note that democratization and good governance figure prominently among the concerns of development agencies.

We recognize poverty as the main obstacle to the consolidation of democracy. Where extreme poverty pervades society, there cannot be stability or development; it undermines the sustenance of democracy. That is the key problem many new democracies confront today. Their efforts to alleviate poverty and foster development are severely constrained as the result of huge external debts. Donor countries should — indeed, must — take initiatives to relieve such debt burdens and thus consolidate these fledgling democracies.

Democratization has been a rewarding experience for us in Bangladesh. Our Government has made serious and sincere efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and promote good governance, and our people have always supported us in these efforts. We have put in place a non-party caretaker Government to conduct national elections in a free, fair and impartial manner. This caretaker Government, unique in the world, assumes the responsibilities for holding parliamentary elections on the completion of the normal tenure of an elected Government. Already, three successive transfers of power have taken place under this system. The present Government, led by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, was voted into office through such an election in October this year. The elections were a celebration of Bangladesh's democratic values.

Bangladesh is seriously engaged in the decentralization of power to local bodies, with a view to bringing democracy to the grass-roots level. We are also encouraging increased participation of women in various decision-making bodies. Efforts aimed at gender mainstreaming through microcredit and informal education have helped empower women.

These tools of societal transformation have met with successes for all the world to see. This has also resulted in the election of a number of women parliamentarians. Women's representation in government bodies has expanded.

We believe in the right to development within the human rights regime. Therefore, an independent Commission on Human Rights is to be established in Bangladesh. The Government has also taken the initiative to create the Office of the Ombudsman to ensure transparency and accountability in the Government. In the context of social development, education and health care have received priority attention. The role and involvement of civil society have been extensive in Bangladesh's development and democratization efforts. However, we recognize that much more remains to be done.

Bangladesh is persuaded that the United Nations provides an ideal forum for Member States to work together in creating a genuine democratic culture. Support from the United Nations provides encouragement to societies striving to build a durable democratic system, often under very difficult circumstances. We strongly recommend that the world body improve its capacity to respond effectively to the requests of Member States for assistance in their democratization efforts. The Cotonou Declaration has provided us with a solid basis in this regard. It inspires hope in us and fills us with confidence.

Ms. Kang Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea): I have the honour of delivering the following statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea.

> "I would like to begin by extending my delegation's deep appreciation to the Government of Benin for its excellent leadership in hosting the Cotonou Conference as well as in its follow-up. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his thoughtful observations in the report contained in document A/56/499.
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> "The spread of democracy since the end of the cold war has been a defining trend of our times. During the last decade alone, numerous democratic Governments have been established around the world. Civil strife and regional conflicts still dominate the headlines, and the challenges are daunting as we try to consolidate democracy and its values around the world. Still, all things considered, we can state with confidence that the move towards democratization has taken firm root as the universal norm and practice at both the national and global levels.
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> "The United Nations has contributed greatly to the process of the unfolding of democratization in many countries with its provision of technical assistance in elections as well as its advocacy of democratic values, the rule of law and human rights. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is allocating half of its resources to programmes in the area of good governance. Indeed, the task of helping countries to strengthen democratic institutions and good governance has become an indispensable part of the work of the United Nations system.
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> "This point is incorporated fully in the Millennium Declaration, in particular chapter V, on human rights, democracy and good governance. All Member States should support the activities of the United Nations to facilitate democratization in many corners of the world while striving to strengthen their own capacities in adhering to the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights.
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> "My delegation subscribes fully to the view that democracy, development, peace and human rights are fundamentally linked and mutually reinforcing. Both democracy and sustainable development thrive on good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Development is sustained best in a democracy that nurtures the free enterprising spirit of its citizens and upholds their human rights. Without development, on the other hand, human decency suffers, and democracies become vulnerable and may fall prey to undemocratic forces.
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> "In this regard, my delegation is in full agreement with the view of the Secretary-General that democracy, or a lack thereof, is at the root of many of today's violent conflicts, the majority of which are internal. Hence, there is a growing need to promote democratization in State-building and peace-building operations. For effective post-conflict reconstruction, lasting peace and sustainable development, democracy

issues beyond electoral assistance should be fully incorporated into peace missions.

"We are of the view that the full potential of the United Nations system to contribute to the cause of democracy can be realized when the challenges identified are met with a comprehensive and holistic approach to democracy. To begin with, the United Nations must be able to coordinate the actions of various departments and agencies within its system in order to avoid costly overlaps and make the most of its resources.

"The Cotonou Conference was the first International Conference of New or Restored Democracies to take place in Africa. The Conference, we believe, has significantly advanced efforts to promote and consolidate democracies through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. Building on the achievements of the Manila, Managua and Bucharest Conferences, the Cotonou Conference has greatly enriched the discussion about democracy, peace, security and development.

"In this regard, we note with satisfaction the efforts undertaken to ensure the success of the Conference, particularly the initiatives taken by the United Nations system, such as the support of UNDP in the planning and organization of the Conference. We hope that the recommendations contained in the Cotonou Declaration will be implemented by the international community and the United Nations system in a methodical and comprehensive manner.

"The Republic of Korea, in an effort to contribute to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, will host the Second International Conference of the Community of Democracies in October next year. As the Assembly is aware, the First Conference, on the theme 'Towards a Community of Democracies', was held in Warsaw, Poland, in June last year with the assistance of other co-convening countries, including my Government. My delegation hopes that the Second Conference, in Seoul, will make the most of the growing international momentum in furthering efforts to solidify the foundation for democracy around the globe. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General points out in his report, we hope the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the two movements — the Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies — will be strengthened further in the coming years."

Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Finally, despite the progress we have achieved so far, there is much work yet to be done. The process of democratization is a slow and winding path, prone to setbacks and sidetracking. It is therefore imperative that we approach the task with patience and in the spirit of collaboration.

Mr. Davison (United States of America): I wish to express the ongoing support of the United States for the movement to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, and in particular for the efforts of Benin, both in hosting the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies last year in Cotonou and in drawing up the draft resolution on this subject.

Over the past quarter of a century, a profound democratic revolution, grounded in the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has reshaped the world political order and helped secure global economic prosperity. Democracy ranks high among the fundamental values that have helped to create this freer, more stable and more prosperous global arena. Democracy is a truly universal system of values, but one that cannot be taken for granted. Rather, democracy is sometimes fragile; its success requires hard work every day. Democracy's powerful message has helped transform the lives of countless people in ways both large and small.

As we promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, we build a stronger, more prosperous and, ultimately, freer world. If the international community acts wisely, future historians looking back at this millennium will identify the growth and consolidation of democracy as one of the greatest achievements and most important legacies of the United Nations.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): I have the honour to speak today on a matter of the utmost importance as regards the actions of Governments, as well as the mission of the United Nations at the beginning of this century: the promotion and consolidation of democracy.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made earlier under this agenda item by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore address only a few considerations on the basis of my own country's experience and participation in the field of democratic processes and support for the consolidation of democratic institutions worldwide.

The movement of new or restored democracies has, since the first gathering in Manila 13 years ago, made a substantive and dynamic contribution to the cause of democracy and has highlighted the value of open dialogue and the sharing of experiences and best practices in assisting the efforts of States to build democratic societies. The process has evolved since then, through Conferences in Managua, Bucharest and, most recently, Cotonou, Benin, to include an increasing number of participating Governments, thus reflecting the widening commitment all over the world in recent years to embrace and advance democratic values and principles.

We believe that the declarations and plans of action adopted by the Conferences of New or Restored Democracies — reflecting, on the one hand, the universality of democratic norms and principles, and, on the other, specific approaches and needs in the area of democratization in various countries and regions of the world — create, together with the relevant resolutions and documents adopted by different United Nations bodies, a comprehensive framework for promoting democracy.

In this context, I would like to recall the resolution adopted by the General Assembly last year on promoting and consolidating democracy, which was first drafted in the context of the follow-up activities to the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and was subsequently developed through dialogue among all United Nations Member States. That resolution, in our view, can make an important contribution to the efforts of States in the area of democracy and democratization.

We are sincerely convinced that this movement will continue to create momentum for actions aimed at ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and at consolidating the rule of law and good governance as fundamental components of a democratic system. In this spirit, we welcome the offer made for the hosting of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Mongolia, and we express our readiness to contribute, on the basis of our own experience, in the preparations for that important event.

In December last year, in Cotonou, Benin, following a multifaceted debate on issues related to democracy, development and peace and security, 111 delegations adopted a Declaration expressing the renewed commitment of States to democratization goals, as well as recommendations addressed to the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system to increase their support and cooperation with a view to supporting the promotion and consolidation of democracy.

The participants in the Conference emphasized the necessity of promoting a democratic culture and ensuring a climate of tolerance and respect for diversity as being instrumental in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts by peaceful means, through mechanisms specific to a democratic system. In the same spirit, the Cotonou Declaration vigorously condemns all forms of international terrorism and affirms the commitment of States to combat this scourge, individually and collectively.

As my Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) stated, it is, indeed, the common responsibility of States to work together in order to prevent and combat acts that constitute barbaric attacks against freedom, humanity and the security of the individual and, at the same time, to uphold our democratic values, norms and achievements.

Inspired by this belief, and convinced that regional organizations have an important role to play in advancing and complementing the work of the United Nations in preventing and combating such acts, my country, Romania, while exercising the chairmanship of OSCE, worked to strengthen the specific advantage of the organization in the area of democracy-building and in consolidating its contribution and to support for the rule of law and democratic institutions and the promotion of tolerance, respect for diversity and political and cultural pluralism. Election monitoring, judicial reform, human rights education, police training, combating trafficking and promoting religious freedom are not a few areas where specific projects and programmes were carried out this year in the area of

the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

As we did in the case of corresponding draft resolutions in previous years, the Romanian delegation supports the draft resolution before us, introduced earlier by the Permanent Representative of Benin. We support the appeal contained therein to examine options for the strengthening of the United Nations support for the efforts of States to consolidate democracy, including designating a focal point to that effect.

My delegation is also looking forward to actively participating in the work of the follow-up mechanism of the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, since it has an important role to play in achieving the goals set by the Conference. We believe that the directions for the future work of the follow-up mechanism, as envisaged by the Cotonou Conference and reflected in the very comprehensive report submitted to this session by the Secretary-General, are instrumental in that regard.

Mr. Roman (Philippines): May I begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the support by the United Nations system of efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

The Philippine delegation is gratified that the momentum towards greater democracy has continued to generate global synergy for these initiatives. Since the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Manila in 1988, many other initiatives by the United Nations General Assembly and other intergovernmental organizations have followed in its footsteps.

We thank and commend the Government of the Republic of Benin for its successful hosting of the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Cotonou from 4 to 6 December 2000. Thirteen countries participated in the Manila Conference; it is indeed a remarkable accomplishment that the Benin Conference, after extending for the first time an invitation to all United Nations Member States, attracted 111 delegations from Africa, Asia and Latin America, 20 delegations from international organizations and 51 delegations from non-governmental organizations.

But more than the number of delegations that participated in the Benin Conference, its important contribution is embodied in the comprehensive framework for promoting democratic principles and practices contained in the Cotonou Declaration that the Conference adopted. As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, the Cotonou Declaration

> "is an important recent addition to the increasing body of resolutions, declarations and other international political and legal materials arising from the Declaration adopted" (*A/56/499, para. 16*)

at the Manila Conference, in 1988. It is clear that democracy is gaining ground. In the last decade the number of democracies around the world has doubled.

The Cotonou Declaration will further solidify the importance of promoting and strengthening democracy in the international community. With its inviolable link with the maintenance of international peace and security, democracy — and its concomitant principle of the rule of law — is now clearly the normative goal for the United Nations.

The United Nations should continue its efforts to consolidate representative democracy and the rule of law as a system of government for all. Democratic governance fosters political pluralism and the effective participation of citizens in the process of nation-building. Democracy also enhances good governance and the ethical discharge of public duties by those who hold power. We also subscribe to the view that democracy acts as a catalytic force for sustainable development by liberating the energies and talents of all peoples. Democracy not only promotes political empowerment, it also facilitates economic development.

While the concept and practice of democracy find divergent expression based on the unique historical experiences of different peoples, its common thread is the participation of citizens in the process of governance. The Philippine delegation is thus in full agreement with the Secretary-General's view that

> "the benchmark for a sustainable democracy is the extent to which a State acts in accordance with universal and indivisible human rights: the civil and political rights, as well as the economic, social and cultural rights defined in international human rights law" (ibid., *para. 27*).

No specific country or group of countries can claim to have perfected the pursuit of democracy. Even established democracies have their weaknesses; but that should not deter our resolve to further promote and consolidate democracy in the world. We urge the United Nations to make this one of its highest priorities in the coming years.

The Philippine delegation therefore requests the Secretary-General to examine or propose options for strengthening the United Nations system's support for the efforts of Member States to consolidate democracy, including the designation of a focal point to that effect, as well as to provide assistance to the follow-up mechanism to the Benin Conference, whose role is set forth in the Declaration.

As a Government that derives its legitimacy from the will of its people, the Philippines ensures that its citizens participate in the political life of the nation. This policy emanates from the belief that the people should become stakeholders in the political, economic and social priorities of Governments in order to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development. It is thus evident that the promotion of democracy around the world is an important element of any long-term strategy of the United Nations to achieve international peace and security.

The Philippine delegation therefore fully supports the draft resolution embodied in document A/56/L.46, introduced under agenda item 35.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): Ukraine welcomes the opportunity to present its views on the important agenda item being considered today by the General Assembly, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

During the last decade alone, a growing number of countries have adopted democratic forms of government, and more people today live in democracies than ever before. Despite such encouraging trends, we are facing new challenges in promoting and consolidating democracy in the world.

The horrible terrorist crimes committed on 11 September have clearly shown how fragile and vulnerable our present-day world is. In these circumstances the international community has to demonstrate its ability to create a democratic environment in which peace and security, prosperity and sustainable development are effectively guaranteed. We are confident that the full potential of consolidated democracy will be achieved only through the joint actions of the entire international community, undertaken with a sense of common purpose and partnership.

In this regard, we welcome the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which took place at Cotonou in December 2000. We believe that the Conference contributed a great deal to what had already been achieved at Manila in 1988, Managua in 1994 and Bucharest in 1997 to develop international cooperation in this sphere, on the basis of universally accepted principles, in particular respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

I would also like, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report submitted under this agenda item as well as to the delegation of Benin for taking the lead in elaborating draft resolution A/56/L.46, which Ukraine strongly supports. We hope that it will be adopted unanimously today and subsequently implemented in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): As a newly restored democracy, Nepal attaches great importance to the agenda item under consideration.

All political systems are imperfect, but among them democracy has proved itself by far the best. It gives people a voice, equality and freedom, together with the possibility of becoming their own masters. The fact that numerous countries on every continent have shed authoritarianism and embraced democracy and freedom over the last decade attests cogently to the strength and popularity of the pluralistic system of governance.

We have witnessed a sea change in the political landscape during the post-cold-war period, with many nations seeing the light of freedom for the first time. But a more formidable challenge remains ahead; that is, to forge economic and social transformation in order to sustain democracy.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the iron curtain crumbled and the powerful wind of democracy and freedom swept the shores of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Today, most people on the planet

benefit from liberal democratic values and governance and enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As many countries have newly embarked on the journey towards democracy, it can be immensely useful to share their experiences and to learn from one another in order to move forward. The Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Benin, was highly productive in this respect.

The transition to democracy has been worthwhile as it has empowered people and enhanced their awareness of new democracies. Yet it has also been painful for virtually all of them. Political instability and conflicts have marred those societies as their Governments try to grapple with poverty, illiteracy, disease and backwardness, which undermine democracy. Extremists and anti-social elements have also been quick to fish in troubled waters.

Nepal is a case in point. Extremists on both the left and the right, as well as groups with vested interests of all kinds, continue to threaten our 11-year-old democracy, exploiting people's vulnerabilities on account of the slow social and economic progress and lack of opportunities. The extreme right was instrumental in fomenting the trouble that culminated in the abrogation of our 18-month-long experiment with democracy in 1960.

This time, it is Maoist terrorists who have for more than five years now engaged in activities that have pushed the country into an abyss of mayhem and violence. The country has lost 2,000 lives and sustained colossal damage to property. The terrorists' demands are outrageous. The main ones include the abolition of the constitutional monarchy, the amendment of the democratic Constitution, the dissolution of the democratically elected Parliament and the provision of an interim government.

Despite this, His Majesty's Government in August this year declared a ceasefire and called on the Maoists to come to the negotiating table. The Government met most of their conditions for talks in good faith, including the release of several of their key leaders under detention and the repeal of the newly promulgated internal security law that they opposed. After three rounds of discussions, and just when the Government was eagerly waiting for the fourth, the terrorists withdrew from the ceasefire and unleashed an unprecedented rampage of terror, death and destruction.

In view of the seriousness of the situation arising out of terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Maoists in various districts — killing innocent civilians and security personnel as well as looting and destroying private property and government installations — a state of emergency has been imposed on the country, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal.

The Maoist outfit has been declared a terrorist organization, security forces have been deployed, and a new ordinance has been promulgated to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice.

Evidently, the terrorists were negotiating to buy time to re-equip and regroup themselves. Their breach of good faith has made clear that their purpose is to destroy the foundations of pluralistic polity and to nip democracy in the bud. Terror is their tool to extort resources and to force innocent people into compliance.

At a time when the United States-led coalition is waging war on international terror, Nepal is engaged in stamping out domestic terrorism. Since the imposition of a state of emergency a fortnight ago, security forces have achieved major victories, and the Maoists are on the retreat. Many hard-core terrorists have been killed in battle, and many more have been apprehended; several Maoist facilities have been destroyed; and the weapons they had looted earlier from security forces have now largely been retrieved.

Although many fundamental freedoms have been suspended, His Majesty's Government has been careful to respect civil liberties and freedom of the press, and habeas corpus provisions remain in effect. The Government's steps have received support from all major political parties and the intelligentsia, and the people are solidly behind the Government.

While the doors for further talks remain open if the Maoists can prove their serious intention to find a negotiated settlement, His Majesty's Government has moved ahead with resolve and determination to win the war on terror. But a decisive victory will continue to elude us as long as we do not defeat the poverty and ignorance that afflict our society. The Government has therefore accorded top priority to poverty reduction and to providing education, health and other basic

services in its development plans to win the hearts and minds of people through improved economic and social conditions.

Arguably, development alone might not guarantee a strengthened democracy and weakened forces of disruption, such as terrorism, but without speedy and sustainable development, democracy, human rights, justice and peace are unlikely to be achieved. The international community ought therefore to help poor new democracies like Nepal to accelerate their sustainable economic development and social progress and thus help their quest to consolidate democratic polity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United Nations system has been helping new and restored democracies and is eager to continue to do so, as the Secretary-General's report enunciates. While this desire deserves our unqualified appreciation, the world body has seldom been able to put money where its mouth is, because of a lack of resources. There is also an imperative to improve efficiency in the use of available limited resources at its disposal.

In sum, sustainable development and social advancement are absolutely essential to preventing a reversal in democratic governance and human rights and freedoms and to promoting international peace and security. The global community must work together to make it happen.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my delegation's support for the draft resolution that was introduced on this subject by the representative of Benin.

Mr. Mubarez (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives my delegation great pleasure to contribute to the debate on accelerating the achievement of democracy, which confirms that the peoples of the world have understood the lessons of the past century, with its wars and tragedies based on egoistic self-interest and short-sightedness, desire for domination and the denial of the national and international rights of others.

It is quite clear that the impulse towards democracy has become an unstoppable tide that cannot be stemmed even in the developing countries, which until recently had problems and obstacles in the way of progress and of creating the future they sought to achieve. The concepts of democracy are widespread today. Human rights, intellectual and political pluralism, the rule of law, political partnership and the role of civil society have become the components of the lodestar of political life in new or restored democracies.

A decade ago, the will to the establishment of democracy in many countries was thwarted by inexperience and backwardness. But where there is a will, there is a way. The collective efforts of countries that have become democracies over the past few years to exchange expertise and coordinate their visions — through a dialogue initiated at the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Manila and ending with the Fourth Conference in Cotonou, and carried forward at regional conferences and symposia on democracy — are bearing fruit today. Because of such dialogue, there is a conviction that democracy is the only way to reach appropriate solutions to the political, social and economic problems faced by contemporary society on the national and international levels.

It is understood today that, despite the universality of democratic principles, there is no one model that can be used in every society. Each society should select its own path towards democracy, in accordance with its own specific characteristics and circumstances. People understand that the pace of achieving democracy is dictated by many political and economic factors arising from the particular nature of each society.

The Republic of Yemen, which made its choice in May 1990, has committed itself and its unity to democracy as the appropriate path to development. Democracy, in our view, is a way of fostering human dignity and improving standards of living. Political reform should therefore go hand in hand with programmes for social, economic and cultural development. Man does not make his daily bread through democracy and good governance, although democratic means are the only way to achieve stability and social and economic development and to effectively establish partnerships in the implementation of development programmes.

On this basis, my country is seeking diligently and simultaneously to achieve the development of its democracy and the democracy of its development. For the first time in my country's history, free and direct elections were held for the presidency of the Republic and at the local level to ensure administrative decentralization and to safeguard the common

partnership of the people in assuming the burdens of comprehensive development. My country is trying to promote democracy through partnership with other new or restored democracies. The city of Sana'a hosted representatives of 16 other countries as they drafted the Declaration of Sana'a, emphasizing and reaffirming democratic practices in our daily lives along with broad partnership of the people. We also offered to host the Fifth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, although we conceded it to Mongolia and offered to host it once it was again the turn of the Asian countries to do so.

We wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Government of Benin in preparing its generous hosting of the Fourth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, held in Cotonou from 4 to 6 December 2000, in which my country participated. By all standards, the Cotonou Declaration represents a new contribution to efforts to establish the genuine bases of democracy. Dialogue and exchanges of experience in democratic practices at the national level enrich the democratic experience and contribute to establishing a comprehensive framework for democracy.

We believe it is important to refer to the role of the United Nations, which has welcomed and supported the efforts of Governments to consolidate and promote new or restored democracies by organizing programmes, conferences and workshops in the areas of human rights, civil society, electoral assistance and free and independent mass media. In this context, we wish to express our appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General before us in document A/56/499 and to welcome his readiness to continue working to expand and consolidate democracy in all parts of the world.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm once again the importance of the role of the United Nations in promoting the path of democracy, since the Organization alone represents international legitimacy and the collective will of the peoples and States of the world.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the outset, I wish to join the preceding speakers in expressing Mongolia's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the preparation of his report on the current agenda item.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the delegation of Benin for the preparation of the draft resolution on this item. Mongolia supports and is sponsoring the draft resolution before us, contained in document A/56/L.46.

My delegation agrees fully with the Secretary-General's statement in his Nobel lecture yesterday that one of the priorities of the United Nations in this century, besides eradicating poverty and preventing conflicts, will be to promote democracy. Today, as the General Assembly considers the issue of new or restored democracies, many of us recall the importance of the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies.

Since the First International Conference, held in Manila in 1988, democracy has emerged as a major international trend. A growing number of States have joined that trend as they have embarked on a process of democratization or have restored their democratic roots. The International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, as an open forum with the active participation of Governments, international organizations, academia and non-governmental organizations, represents a fitting assembly in which to share experiences and lessons learned as well as to explore innovative approaches to meeting the existing and emerging challenges to democracy.

The Fourth International Conference, held in Cotonou, Benin, in December last year, was attended by governmental delegations from 111 Member States and representatives of 20 international organizations and 51 non-governmental organizations. It enriched further our understanding of democracy and its links with peace, security and development; of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and of ways and means to better address the challenges of democracy. The general debate in Cotonou on national experiences in democracy, peace, security and development, and the parallel thematic debates on such issues as democracy, good governance and development, the participation of youth and women; and democracy and the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts proved to be very useful, focusing on different aspects of multidimensional concepts and phenomena pertaining to democracy.

My delegation finds paragraph 11 of the report, concerning the obstacles to the consolidation of democracy, to be quite useful, because it focuses on

both national and international factors, such as poverty and its causes, unequal access to vital resources, restrictions on democratic rights, the inequality of the markets in goods and capital, and the burden of foreign debt.

Many valuable recommendations were adopted in the Cotonou Declaration. Among the 22 recommendations, the one related to the establishment of the follow-up mechanism to the Conference deserves, in our view, special attention. My delegation also finds the recommendations to help new and restored democracies establish indicators to analyse progress made in the democratization process very useful and practical. Furthermore, the call made in the Cotonou Declaration for the designation of a focal point in the United Nations system to support the efforts of Member States should be given due consideration.

My delegation wishes to join the others in expressing our deep appreciation to the Government of Benin for its efforts with regard to the successful organization of this Conference and to the people of Benin for their hospitality.

With the establishment and strengthening of the institutions of representative democracy, Mongolia has passed from the stage of transition to democracy to that of consolidation of democracy. As in many similar cases, the biggest challenges to democratic consolidation are not political, but rather socio-economic, the main ones being poverty and slow economic development related to the difficulties of the transition to a market-oriented economy. In the light of the indissoluble links between human rights and the consolidation of democracy, an independent human rights commission has recently been established in Mongolia.

The delegation of Mongolia commends the manifold assistance provided by the United Nations system to new or restored democracies, including Mongolia, ranging from support for promoting a culture of democracy to electoral assistance and to institution- and capacity-building for democratization. In this connection, I would like to express our hope that the recently launched national programme "Good governance for human security", aimed at further implementing democratic reforms through facilitating a focus on policy, coherence and sustainability of our overall development strategy, will also receive the support and assistance of the United Nations system.

The Government of Mongolia has issued an invitation for the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2003. On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our gratitude to all Member States for accepting our invitation. The Government of Mongolia offered to host the Conference not only because it is the turn of an Asian country to do so, but also because we are committed to democracy, believe strongly in democratic rules and have a decade of experience that could be useful to others.

Mongolia has experienced significant democratic change during the past decade, including the establishment of a multiparty system and democratic institutions, the adoption of a new democratic Constitution, the holding of free and fair elections and the promotion of free and vigorous mass media. We would like to invite all Member States, the United Nations system and other international organizations to collaborate closely with us in preparing for and holding this important forum.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is my pleasure to express our sincere appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on the support provided by the United Nations system to Governments in their efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

In this respect, we would like to recognize the important work carried out by the United Nations Development Programme, not only in development assistance but also in promoting democratic processes in the countries that are part of the movement of new or restored democracies. Likewise, we commend the resolute support of UNDP for the international conferences held successfully on this subject, especially the most recent of these, held in Cotonou, Benin, in December 2000.

We attach importance to this series of International Conferences, which have provided a particularly appropriate forum for the sharing of experiences among States that are committed to democracy, as well as encouraged systematic progress in democratic processes on a global scale. The Conferences, in which States have taken part, are becoming increasingly open to greater participation by all of the actors involved in those processes, including

non-governmental organizations and various members of civil society.

We the countries of Central America have pledged to develop peace, security, democracy and development in our region and, to this end, in the past two decades, despite all the obstacles that we have had to overcome, we have been promoting important advances in the area of democracy. We are determined to continue to implement the recommendations adopted at the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, and we encourage all of the States that are participating in this movement to continue to work to build stable democracies.

The people of Central America are determined to face the future firmly resolved to continue to consolidate our democratic experience, so that the democracy that we have been building in our region can be firm, stable and lasting. Furthermore, as we are pledged to bequeath a better future to coming generations, we consider sustainable development to be a fundamental pillar that can in no way be dissociated from democratic processes.

The democratic process that our Governments have been promoting in Central America has made it possible for various sectors of civil society to be better represented and to participate more fully in decision-making. We have promoted our citizens' unrestricted enjoyment of the right to fully exercise their fundamental freedoms, and we have ensured respect for human rights. We appreciate the importance of the positive societal contribution of the communications media in promoting democratic values and in the responsible exercise of their right to freedom of expression so that, through constructive and instructive criticism, they can promote sound and transparent governance on the part of our leaders.

The democratic process cannot be separated from our historical roots and cultural values, as the promotion of democracy and tolerance must prompt us to create societies that allow us to live together peacefully, fostering unity in diversity. We are grateful for all the international cooperation that we have received in this noble endeavour, and we trust that we will continue to enjoy the resolute support of the international community for all the efforts made by the Central American region.

We should also take note of the progress made in the area of democracy throughout the hemisphere. Latin America has left autocratic regimes behind and opted for democratic governance as a driving force of development. We have worked hard to continue to implement democratic reform and, in keeping with our historical commitment, we have pledged to strengthen our democratic structures. This joint effort was in evidence last September, with the adoption, in Lima, Peru, of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which reflects the regional consensus of Latin American Governments on this subject. This important document sets out principles, norms and mechanisms aimed not only at promoting democracy, but at preserving and defending it.

The Central American region has confronted many obstacles and challenges over the years during the difficult process of democratization in our emerging democracies. The consequences of war had an enormous impact not only on the economic sector but in the social area. It has not been easy to combat the negative effects of conflict — the thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees, the migration and the poverty.

The context cannot be viewed in isolation; we must also consider the various related factors, such as the costly structural adjustments that we have been making to our economies in accordance with international financial requirements, the heavy foreign debt burden and the unequal conditions that persist in world trade, which have limited our steady development. In this respect, we call for just treatment by the international financial institutions and greater access to international capital markets, goods and services.

We believe that democracy must be closely related not only to the rule of law, but to the promotion of development in the context of an appropriate balance between individual and collective rights, so that economic models can be developed that allow equal opportunity, promote investment, generate jobs and combat poverty. It is our firm intention to continue to work tirelessly to strengthen State institutions, professionalize public services, eradicate administrative corruption, ensure transparency and efficiency in governance and bring public officials and citizens closer together. It is our duty to jealously guard the independence and autonomy of State institutions and to promote the development and the autonomy of local government. This work is closely related to the promotion of the rule of law, which provides

assurances and legal security to our citizens. We have undertaken a review of our legal statutes, making it possible for us to move towards democracy and the modernization of the State, with civil authority always prevailing over military power.

In Central America we have made great progress, not only in the process of transition — involving painstaking work in the area of pacifying, disarming and reintegrating armed groups into civil life, as well as campaigns to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence and integration into political, social and cultural life — but also in creating awareness among our peoples about the need to develop a culture of peace, which is closely related to the promotion of civic and democratic values.

Our countries have been endeavouring to create the conditions necessary to guarantee the integration and involvement of broad sectors of our societies in national plans, through mechanisms aimed at citizen interaction and participation so as to promote dialogue among the various sectors involved. This has produced positive changes leading to the development of national consultation processes aimed at achieving governability, thereby enabling us to make progress in formulating public policy in the context of a national plan.

We believe that democracy is built through a complete process involving the participation of our citizens in social and political life. Such participation involves not only choosing national leaders, but the shaping of the form of government that best suits the citizens. We believe that only by investing in civic education to promote democratic institutions can we advance firmly towards strengthening our democratic processes. To this end, we have been including the subject of civic education in primary and secondary school curricula, and we have been developing large-scale civic campaigns to provide education at the national level about democratic values.

We are proud to reaffirm that the results of these initiatives have clearly borne fruit. They were particularly evident in the recent elections in Central America, in which the citizens expressed the desire to live in peace and tolerance, and demonstrated their great spirit of civic responsibility.

The recent presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua and Honduras showed that enormous progress has been made in the democratic development of our countries, reflecting the positive environment prevailing in all of Central America. The growing participation of our people in these electoral processes clearly shows the enthusiasm of our citizens — mostly young people — who believe in democracy and aspire to live in peace and to move forward, united, in building a better future.

A collective spirit about the free exercise of universal suffrage has been evidenced in the fact that a large percentage of our citizens who are eligible to vote participated in the recently concluded electoral processes. In doing so they clearly said "No" to non-participation and gave a clear mandate to our leaders to continue to promote and strengthen our democratic processes.

We recognize the outstanding work that has been done by all the States actively participating in the movement of new or restored democracies. We encourage them to continue to fight tirelessly to strengthen democratic values and institutions, to promote citizen participation and to strengthen the rule of law. We are confident that, together, we will bring about enormous transformations in the century ahead that will be of great benefit to our citizens, our societies and our countries.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. Action on draft resolution A/56/L.46 will be taken at a later date.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, as consultations are still ongoing concerning agenda item 32, entitled "Multilingualism", consideration of that item is postponed to a later date.

I should also like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the remaining two agenda items, namely, "The situation in Central America" and "Towards global partnerships", will be taken up this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.84

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

84th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 11 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 44

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/391, A/56/416)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/273)

Draft resolutions (A/56/L.42, A/56/L.45/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.42.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala". In addition to Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States of America and Venezuela — the countries whose names appear on the original document — the following delegations have decided to offer their valuable sponsorship of the draft resolution: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

On 29 December 1996, 36 years of internal conflict in Guatemala were brought to an end with the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace. That Agreement was the result of a six-year negotiation process under the auspices of the United Nations, and it set in motion a series of political, military, legislative, social, economic, agrarian, ethnic and cultural measures, all of which are part of a broad national agenda for peace.

Since then, in accordance with a decision taken by the parties, the United Nations has played an important role in the verification of compliance with the commitments undertaken by the parties. That, in essence, is the function of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

The presence of MINUGUA in Guatemala has been very positive. The parties, and Guatemalan society, have recognized that the United Nations, through its Mission, has contributed certainty and reliability to the process of implementing the peace accords. In Guatemala there is a solid consensus about the need for MINUGUA to remain in the country until 2003.

As can be seen, the draft resolution refers to earlier decisions by the General Assembly, to reports of the Secretary-General and of the Mission, to progress made and challenges involved in the peace process, and

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to the importance that the international community attaches to compliance with the outstanding commitments, within the framework of the new time frame agreed to, which continues to the end of 2004.

The draft resolution also notes that the parties have asked the United Nations to support the peace-building process until 2003. One of the key instruments for the promotion of peace, respect for human rights and verification of fulfilment of outstanding commitments is precisely the work that is being done by the United Nations Mission in Guatemala. The draft resolution would renew the Mission's mandate for 2002 and request the Secretary-General to submit, as soon as possible during the fifty-seventh session, an updated report with recommendations concerning the continuation of the peace-building phase after 31 December 2002.

I would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the fact that, following yesterday's consultations, the original sponsors have agreed on a change to the text. The first part of paragraph 13 should now read as follows:

> "*Encourages* the Government to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the Mission on human rights, in particular those related to the systematic impunity for crimes and human rights violations ..."

In short, the words "in view of", which appeared in the original text, are replaced by "those related to". That revision would not change the substance of the original text but would introduce a nuance that, we hope, will allow the draft resolution to gain general acceptance.

Guatemala is a United Nations success story. The parties have shown that they are unequivocally committed to the peace process. Important progress has been made, although challenges remain to be overcome. The sponsors hope that the international community and international organizations will continue to contribute generously by providing financial and technical resources. We are convinced that the Guatemalan peace process is a worthwhile investment.

For these reasons, the sponsors trust that the General Assembly will renew its political support for Guatemala and, at the proper time, unanimously adopt the draft resolution that my delegation has the honour to introduce.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.45/Rev.1.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.45/Rev.1, under agenda item 44, entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development".

I am pleased to announce that, in addition to the original sponsors — Austria, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Nicaragua, Panama, Sweden and my own country, Costa Rica — the following countries have decided to sponsor the draft resolution: Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Suriname and the United Kingdom.

The draft resolution attempts to reflect the important progress achieved in Central America in the quest for peace, democracy and sustainable development, as well as to identify the path that is yet to be followed. In the 1980s, war, destruction, poverty, social injustice and hunger prevailed in our fraternal Central American republics. Today, peace reigns in Central America. At present, all of the nations of the isthmus are deeply committed to freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the preservation of the environment. Today, despite economic difficulties and tragic natural disasters, the region is steadfastly moving forward towards greater economic, political and social development.

It should be pointed out that the progress achieved is the direct result of a change of attitude on the part of the leaders and the peoples of the region. The people of Central America have consciously and resolutely renounced violence. At the same time, we are embracing dialogue, democracy and consensus as fundamental pillars of both human and international relations. The peoples of Central America have rejected the culture of war and embraced the culture of peace. The Central American plan for peace, democracy and development is designed to tackle directly the deep-rooted causes of internal conflict.

We should note with particular satisfaction the achievements with regard to human rights and democracy. It cannot be said today that in Central

America massive human rights violations are taking place or that the democratic will of the peoples is being disregarded.

The preambular part of the draft resolution recognizes the efforts and achievements of the peoples and the Governments of Central America in the search for sustainable peace, the building of true democracy based on justice and reconciliation and the promotion of economic and social development. The draft resolution reiterates the crucial role played by international cooperation in reaching those objectives.

The draft resolution highlights the valuable role of the various Central American cooperation mechanisms and bodies that as a whole promote brotherly relations between the countries of Central America and the rest of the international community.

The draft resolution also stresses the progress achieved in the peace process in Guatemala and the implementation of the Peace Agreements under the auspices of the United Nations Verification Mission. Similarly, it acknowledges the successful process of democratization in El Salvador and the holding of democratic elections in Nicaragua and Honduras.

Nevertheless, the draft resolution recognizes that the building of peace and democracy in Central America is a dynamic and ongoing process that is still subject to serious structural obstacles. In that regard, the draft resolution stresses the urgent need to eradicate extreme poverty, promote economic and social justice, guarantee respect for fundamental human rights and protect the most vulnerable groups and minorities. The draft resolution recognizes that these aspects are potentially destabilizing elements for the region. It also acknowledges with great satisfaction the constructive roles played by United Nations missions in the region, and takes note of the convening last September of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Furthermore, the draft resolution notes with great concern the serious and harmful effects of an unfavourable economic environment on the economies of the region, as well as its negative impact on the efforts of Central American peoples to achieve sustainable development. In that context, the draft resolution notes that it has not yet been possible to overcome the devastating effects of hurricanes Mitch and Keith, or the earthquakes and droughts that have devastated the region. The draft resolution therefore expresses gratitude for international cooperation and solidarity in connection with these national catastrophes, and takes into account the efforts of Central American peoples and Governments to mitigate the effects of the crises and to reduce vulnerability.

In its operative part, the draft resolution praises Central American efforts to achieve peace and democracy and to promote sustainable development. It also reaffirms the need to continue to improve electoral processes and acknowledges the need to support national and regional efforts to overcome the deep-rooted causes of the crises and armed conflicts that have afflicted the region. It welcomes the results of the meeting of the regional Consultative Group for the Transformation and Modernization of Central America, and reaffirms the importance of the Puebla-Panama Plan for economic development in Mesoamerica and the Declaration of Guatemala II to reduce vulnerability.

Paragraph 8 expresses gratitude for the response of the international community to the national disasters that have afflicted the region, and requests additional assistance to continue to rebuild El Salvador.

Furthermore, the draft resolution welcomes the progress achieved in implementing the Guatemala Peace Agreements, and asks all United Nations programmes and bodies to continue to cooperate in the implementation and verification of the Agreements. It also acknowledges the importance of the Central American Integration System and highlights regional integration efforts.

The draft resolution calls on Central American Governments to comply fully with their international commitments in promoting and protecting human rights, eradicating poverty, modernizing public administration, eliminating corruption and other areas.

The draft resolution takes note of the willingness of the countries of the region to resolve their disputes through peaceful means, and calls on the Secretary-General to offer the greatest possible support to national initiatives to build peace and democracy. The draft resolution concludes by requesting the Secretary-General to submit a new report on this item next year, and by deciding to include the item on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session.

Building stable and lasting peace in Central America requires continuous efforts. Until each and every one of the republics of Central America has reached a satisfactory level of sustainable human development, the situation in the region will remain precarious. As long as some countries in the region have not reached a satisfactory and sustainable level of economic and social development, it will be impossible to consider that peace has been achieved.

Achievements in the area of democracy and human rights must be upheld, broadened and consolidated. We must take effective measures to end the scandalous gap between the richest and the poorest. We must guarantee that the basic needs of the poorest and the weakest are fully met. It is crucial to reduce the vulnerability of our countries to natural catastrophes, and to adopt effective measures for reconstruction and normalization after such catastrophes. We must make greater efforts to guarantee civil safety for our citizens and to avoid the internationalization of criminal activity. The support of the international community, and of the United Nations in particular, is essential for carrying out these tasks.

In that context, the draft resolution that I have just introduced constitutes necessary political support for the region. I would therefore like to recommend that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

Today we are addressing an important item, namely, "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". This is an important issue, and it is also a vast and complex one, for it concerns as many political, economic or cultural systems as there are States involved. It therefore cannot be dispatched with haste, but calls for a global, yet targeted, vision.

As in the past, the European Union wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the quality of his reports on this agenda item. They provide us with the overall picture needed to evaluate progress made and to consider future action. His recommendations are valuable and give us food for thought.

Once again this year, the European Union is pleased to note that the situation in Central America is progressing, despite the grave problems, social inequalities and poverty that remain. The greater part of the region is now in a position to consolidate the progress made towards a peaceful settlement to the various conflicts and towards free exercise of democratic rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law. The orderly elections held in Nicaragua and Honduras attest to that. The European Union attaches particular importance to the need for the populations to be provided with the necessary means in order to participate actively in the democratic process.

The European Union intends to continue to invest its efforts and resources in the economic and social development of the countries of Central America. It is mainly within the San José dialogue, which has been operating for 15 years now, that the European Union and the countries of Central America maintain a dialogue and institutionalized cooperation. In that dialogue, we particularly stress the importance of the regional integration of the countries of Central America. Those countries are themselves aware of the validity of this approach as a means of progressing towards peace, development in all its aspects and the resolution of certain points of contention that still exist between some of the countries, in particular with regard to incidents associated with the demarcation of borders.

In that regard, we welcome the launching of the Puebla-Panama Plan, aimed at promoting the integration of Central America and the southern states of Mexico.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the various initiatives undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to put an end to border disputes. We welcome the positive advances made by Guatemala and Belize in their dialogue, in which the OAS is playing a moderating role. The European Union welcomes the role played by the OAS Verification Mission in the dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua. This has helped considerably to reduce tensions between the two countries. We strongly encourage the OAS to continue its efforts along these

lines, and we congratulate it on its initiatives. We encourage all States to settle peacefully the remaining border disputes.

The European Union's cooperation strategy in Central America is focused on support for democratic States that respect human rights, mainly by consolidating the process of peace-building and democratization in the region, by supporting economic integration and the implementation of common policies, and by strengthening regional institutions and the role of civil society in the integration process. This is the strategy that the European Union supported during the meeting of the Consultative Group held in Madrid in March 2001, which provided an opportunity to examine possibilities for development and integration in the region. Generally speaking, the Union intends to act in the context of efforts made by the international community, and those of the United Nations in particular.

The situation in Guatemala and the activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) are a particular priority for the European Union. We support the Secretariat's proposals to extend the Mission's mandate until December 2002, with a view to its completion in 2003. The challenges posed by the implementation of the peace process make it necessary to continue that Mission.

Indeed, much remains to be done in Guatemala: the full implementation of the Fiscal Pact, and particularly of measures to restore a climate of confidence among the population regarding the management of public spending; the fight against corruption; implementation of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the introduction of an integrated rural development plan; replacement of the Presidential General Staff; the substantial agenda of legislative reforms; and so on.

With the extension of its mandate, MINUGUA will be able to assist Guatemala in achieving these important objectives. It is nonetheless clear that the efforts of the international community cannot substitute for national ones. It is therefore essential that not only the State, but also the people of Guatemala as a whole, devote themselves wholeheartedly to advancing the peace process.

The European Union wishes to urge once again the Guatemalan authorities to continue their efforts to ensure full respect for human rights, to combat impunity and to respect their obligations as enshrined in the agenda for the peace process, including the recommendations of the Commission for Historical Clarification. It would like to emphasize the importance of the Mission's report and recommendations in the area of human rights.

The European Union remains concerned by the acts of intimidation directed against human rights non-governmental organizations, members of the judiciary, journalists and individuals; the murders that have been committed; and the presence and activities of illegal security forces and clandestine structures that have been observed this year. The impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of those crimes does no credit to the Guatemalan governmental bodies in their role as guarantor of full respect for human rights. The impunity which they enjoy should be combated, and, in particular, the tolerance, acquiescence or even complicity of certain public officials should be eliminated. The European Union is fully prepared to lend them its support and assistance in their action towards that end.

Finally, the peace process is, unfortunately, encountering further obstacles that urgently need to be overcome. The level of social and human development remains low. The European Union has also recently noted a social and political polarization, which can only have a negative impact on implementation of the agenda. We thus welcome initiatives aimed at launching a dialogue to attenuate this political polarization.

Lastly, the economic crisis is certainly not making things easier, particularly at a time of food crisis such as that being suffered in the east of the country following the recent drought. Once again, the Union is committed to improving its aid and cooperation programmes to assist the Guatemalan authorities to overcome these difficulties.

The elections of 4 November in Nicaragua took place in a positive atmosphere, and we welcome the massive turnout on that occasion. In the view of the European Union electoral monitoring mission, those elections, notwithstanding some minor problems, were free and transparent. They took place in an atmosphere of order and calm. The European Union congratulates President Bolaños on his election and calls on him to take all necessary measures to deal with the problems in the area of good governance and eradication of

corruption, which are preconditions for the development of the country. The European Union hopes that the new President will implement the promised initiatives on reform of the electoral law and the depoliticization of the Supreme Electoral Council.

The European Union welcomes the democratic maturity shown by the Honduran people during the elections of 25 November last. The Union appreciates the administration of the Flores Government, which contributed to consolidating democracy in the country and strengthening the rule of law. We wish the same success to President Maduro, and the European Union will continue to provide Honduras with its full support.

In El Salvador, next January we will be marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the peace agreements in January. This is a significant event, and it is with great satisfaction that we look back at El Salvador's path to peace. We hope that the last issue still to be resolved — that of the fund for the wounded and war-disabled — will be settled fully and promptly.

The Secretary-General rightly emphasizes that, besides laying the foundations for good governance, it is important to improve other human development indicators and to combat poverty, which has served only to fuel the social and political tensions that ignited the armed conflict. A global strategy must also include actively combating structural inequalities, which have no place in the democracies of Central America. These peoples must build on their successes to move on towards a future of peace, stability and development, which they all planned together and from which all should benefit.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Five years ago this very month, the peace agreements in Guatemala were signed, bringing to an end a conflict that had lasted several decades. This was the last armed conflict in Central America, and it is now evident that viable peace has taken root in the region. The main challenge now facing the nations of Central America is to combat poverty and safeguard human rights. In addressing these issues, they will also be able to count on the continued support of the international community.

The peace agreements in Guatemala were probably among the most comprehensive ever concluded in this kind of context. They were the result of a long negotiating process that aimed not only at ending an armed conflict, but also at changing Guatemalan society in such a way that injustice, as far as possible, could be undone and the social and economic causes of renewed conflict eliminated.

These broad and wide-ranging agreements led to great expectations in Guatemala. Five years might seem a short period of time to complete implementation and to fulfil the expectations of the people of Guatemala. Although significant progress has been made in the implementation of the accords in a number of sectors, much remains to be done. This is particularly true as regards the situation of the indigenous people. Further efforts are required by the Government of Guatemala to ensure the implementation of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We do recognize the efforts of the Government of Guatemala to have Congress pass a number of important laws related to the implementation of the peace agreements, as regards, inter alia, social, economic, regional and land questions. It is of paramount importance for the successful continuation of the implementation process that all political forces in Guatemala realize that this process is necessary for the development of the country and for the consolidation of democracy. My Government calls upon all political forces in Guatemala to make this issue their own.

The easiest part of the implementation process was probably ending the armed conflict. Unfortunately, this does not mean that violence has disappeared. The culture of intimidation and impunity gives cause for great concern and needs to be addressed most seriously by the authorities.

Since the conclusion of the peace agreements, my Government has supported the implementation process. We will continue to do so next year at approximately the same level as this year and we look forward, together with other friends of Guatemala, to the opportunity of meeting with the Government of Guatemala in February next year at the Consultative Group meeting in Washington. We hope that the Consultative Group meeting will confirm further progress in the implementation process. Part of our support has also been through contributions to maintain the presence of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). We consider the presence of MINUGUA to be of the greatest importance and therefore support the extension of its mandate until 31 December 2002.

In concluding, let me point to the fact that, earlier this autumn, elections took place in both Nicaragua and Honduras. I congratulate the peoples, Governments and institutions of those countries on the orderly manner in which the election processes were conducted.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be very brief, since I fully associate myself with the statement of Ambassador Bernd Niehaus of Costa Rica, who spoke on behalf of our subregional group. I do, however, want to add a few words about the Guatemalan peace process and our hope that the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) will be extended through 2002, as reflected in draft resolution A/56/L.42, and until 2003. Guatemala is certainly pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution.

When President Alfonso Portillo was in New York attending the general debate, he had an opportunity to meet with a limited number of representatives of States that have been especially close to the Guatemalan peace process. The meeting was convened to have a frank interchange of views regarding the current status of compliance with the peace accords and to ask for the General Assembly's support in extending the mandate of MINUGUA. As President Portillo pointed out in that meeting, the Government is fully committed to implementing the peace accords. It is also committed to overcoming the obstacles that have impeded more rapid progress in some key areas mentioned in the Secretary-General's reports, circulated in documents A/56/273 of 8 August 2001 and A/56/416 of 27 September 2001.

I would like to express our appreciation for both reports — one on Guatemala, the other on all of Central America. We endorse the general thrust of the overall assessment that is presented to us. Although we disagree with some of the specific observations contained in the reports, we accept that the implementation of the commitments contained in the Guatemalan peace accords has not moved forward as rapidly as we would have liked or as was originally expected, in spite of the important progress achieved. Indeed, perhaps the signatories of the peace accords underestimated the difficulties of promoting as profound a set of transformations as those contemplated, especially when they affected the interests of particular groups.

Even so, Central America in general and Guatemala in particular are experiencing a political, economic and social transformation of historic proportions that will lead to more plural, democratic, participatory and tolerant societies. Progress, as could have been predicted, has not been linear, but a comparison of the image of my country today with that of 1990 leaves no doubt as to how far we have advanced. Armed conflict and persistent violations of human rights have come to an end; the army has been subordinated to civil society; democratic institutions are taking root; the role of women in society has advanced; and there has been marked progress in moving towards a truly multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural society.

Having said all this, one must also recognize, as I stated, that much remains to be done. The difficulties we have encountered in moving ahead on compliance with all the commitments undertaken in the peace accords have been compounded by the serious economic downturn, caused mainly by an adverse international economic environment. Instead of higher standards of living, as foreseen in the peace accords, many families face unemployment and deprivation. In spite of our recent tax reform, we are unable to meet all the financial implications of compliance with some of the commitments. For precisely that reason, we insist on the need for MINUGUA's continued presence and the support of the Group of Friends of the peace process. The worst thing that could happen to us now would be for them to abandon prematurely what must be considered an unfinished project. In other words, our commitment to continue implementing the peace accords, in the framework of the rescheduled timetable approved on 12 December 2000, means that we must continue to have the support of the United Nations.

I wish to conclude by thanking my colleagues in the General Assembly for the support they have been providing to the peace process in Guatemala. I also thank the Secretary-General and his staff for their determination in advancing the process. I earnestly hope that this support will continue, so that when we meet again to consider this agenda item, we will be in a position to report on the consolidation of peace and democracy in Central America, including, of course, in my own country.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its thanks to the Secretary-General for the report on the situation in

Central America as well as to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) for the report on human rights in that country.

The report on the situation in Central America shows the essential contribution of the United Nations to the region in the last decade. Peacekeeping operations and observation and verification missions have not only supported peacemaking in Central America but also contributed to the consolidation of its democratic institutions and to respect for human rights.

My delegation would like to highlight the effectiveness of the follow-up work to the El Salvador peace process carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Political Affairs, in particular the monitoring of the outstanding aspects of the peace agreements and the support for the Government's efforts to incorporate some of these issues into a broader development programme. Despite a few difficulties inherent in peace-building, it is a historic accomplishment that the political, social and moral objectives originally set in these agreements are today an essential part of the Salvadoran national heritage, and they deserve the support of the country's people.

We also would like to express our satisfaction at the consolidation of democratic systems in Central America through the organization and holding of general elections in which peace, participation and tolerance have prevailed. There is no doubt that the elections have proved to be effective measures to promote peace, democracy, freedom and development for the citizens of the region.

Also deserving of our recognition is the assistance of the United Nations system in improving the living conditions of the rural populations of the region's countries, as well as the contributions of the World Food Programme in addressing the effects of the serious drought that has afflicted Central America. UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, along with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, have supported the efforts of the region to fight poverty and relieve external debt through strategies and initiatives such as the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Furthermore, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Population Fund have carried out various actions to improve health care, in particular for those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Central America has been transformed by the progress made in the last decade. Internal conflicts have been overcome through democratic Governments and political, economic and social transformations. Nevertheless, although armed conflict and the continuous violation of human rights have ended, the region must undertake collective efforts to overcome poverty and structural inequalities. We are concerned by the devastating effects, both economic and social, of natural disasters such as the earthquakes, droughts, floods and hurricanes that have taken place in the past year. Of additional concern is the deterioration of the Central American economies, due mainly to an unfavourable international economic environment.

We must urge the Central American Governments to formulate effective policies to reduce the damage caused by natural disasters and the unfavourable economic environment, as well as to protect the most vulnerable groups. These national and regional efforts deserve the solidarity of the international community, whose continued cooperation with the region is indispensable so that the progress of recent years will not be lost and the economic, institutional and social development of Central America becomes irreversible. The countries that are friends of the region, international bodies and international businesspeople and investors must commit themselves fully to this goal.

Colombia has supported and stood by the peace process in Central America since its beginnings, and has encouraged and acknowledged the efforts and progress made. This is why we know that peace and democracy will not be secure if they are not broadly and consistently supported until development is achieved. A firm and lasting peace requires not only an end to conflict but also economic and social development, as well as universal access to food, housing, education, work and basic public services.

Now, therefore, is the time to renew our commitment and to continue to invest in a peace that interests and involves all of us. International support and economic, financial and technical cooperation to promote economic and social development in the region must continue so that we can complement the efforts of the brotherly peoples and Governments of Central America to consolidate peace and democracy.

Thus, Colombia is sponsoring the draft resolution on the situation in Central America and supports its adoption.

Colombia, as a member of the Group of Friends of Guatemala, acknowledges the important developments in the implementation of the peace agreement as well as the extremely important role of the United Nations, through MINUGUA, in the peace process. Worthy of mention are the progress in human rights with the signing and ratification of various international instruments by the Guatemalan Government, as well as MINUGUA's coordinated peace-building efforts. Nevertheless, the events of recent months put the peace process and national unity at risk. Colombia urges the Government of Guatemala to continue renewing its commitment to the peace programme and urges the United Nations to renew MINUGUA's mandate and to continue its support of the peace-building process in that country. It also calls on the international community to reaffirm its support for peace-building in Guatemala.

Furthermore, all of the actors in the peace process must renew dialogue as soon as possible so that the implementation of the peace programme can continue. In such an ambitious process, it is inevitable that obstacles of various kinds will arise. Overcoming them requires not only the firm commitment of all parties but also that of the international community, which must step up its support for the process.

Colombia is sponsoring the draft resolution that ensures the continuation of MINUGUA in Guatemala as another sign of its firm commitment to the brotherly Guatemalan people and Government, as well as to their efforts to consolidate the peace and plan the development that they deserve.

Mr. Andino Salazar (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, through you, Sir, to thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the situation in Central America, contained in document A/56/416, which sets out the progress achieved by the countries of the region in their efforts to promote peace, freedom, democracy and sustainable development.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by Ambassador Bernd Niehaus in introducing draft resolution A/56/L.45/Rev.1, which we hope will be adopted without a vote.

The Government of El Salvador attaches great importance to the item "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", a subject that the General Assembly has been considering since 1983 as a result of the armed conflicts that devastated the region in the 1980s, but that have been overcome in the years since then by the peoples and Governments of the region, thanks to the steadfast and decisive support of the international community and the United Nations system.

Acknowledging the qualitative progress that Central America has made in its transition from war to peace, and from peace to democracy and development, we share the assessment of the Secretary-General, expressed in the report, that a number of obstacles remain to be overcome in order to strengthen institutions so as to ensure the consolidation and proper functioning of democracy, the rule of law and sustainable development, which in turn will help to achieve greater regional integration for the benefit of the peoples of Central America.

As for my country, the Government of El Salvador is pleased to note that its efforts to strengthen its institutions, ensure the safety of its citizens and consolidate the important pillars of the peace agreements — such as the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the National Civil Police — have been acknowledged by the Secretary-General in his report.

The situation in El Salvador and the changes that have taken place in the other countries of the region — especially Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala — confirm that there is a new reality in Central America today, reflecting deep changes in the social, political, economic, institutional and security situation. Nevertheless, new challenges have developed for the peoples and the Governments of Central America, primarily because of their vulnerability to natural disasters. This year alone there were two powerful earthquakes in El Salvador — in January and February — and a protracted drought, which worsened the agricultural situation in the region and endangered the food security of large segments of the rural population.

Independently of the impact of natural disasters and other outside factors, in the political arena the

countries of Central America have continued to show signs of their willingness to continue to strengthen their democratic systems through what the Secretary-General has called "second-generation" electoral processes. In this context, free and transparent elections took place last year in Nicaragua and Honduras, on 4 and 25 November, respectively. I am pleased to congratulate the peoples and the Governments of both countries for the true civic example that they have set, the success of the election process and the broad participation of the electorate, which will help to strengthen democracy and establish a good model for the countries of the region.

The countries of Central America are aware of the urgent and imperative need to move forward in the process of achieving sustainable development in the region. Thus, within the context of the work of the Regional Consultative Group for Central America, which met in Spain in March 2001, the Governments of the region put forward the Madrid Proposal, a strategic framework for the transformation and modernization of Central America in the twenty-first century.

One of the objectives of that Proposal is to promote development and improve living conditions through sustained economic growth and the more equitable distribution of wealth. The Madrid Proposal focuses on reducing social, economic and environmental vulnerability, transforming the productive sectors and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and greater participation on the part of civil society in the development process. It has led to the creation of 34 concrete major-impact projects, including those relating to the fight against poverty; the Central American logistical corridor; the Meso-American biological corridor; support for small and medium-sized businesses; and the provision of electricity and gas pipelines.

It is important to point out that the countries of Central America have, by consensus, identified this endeavour as a means of deepening, consolidating and speeding up the regional integration process, thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, a subject that has been widely discussed by the peoples and the Governments of Central America.

The strategy to transform and modernize Central America for the twenty-first century is the main strategy for regional development for the next 20 years and, as such, it includes other important initiatives, such as the Puebla-Panama Plan, a regional project designed for Central America that will have a considerable positive impact on business in the region. Central American businesses will, as a result, have access to a world-class logistical trade network, with a reduction in production costs, improved delivery times for shipping merchandise and greater security in cargo transportation. The logistical corridor will thus act as a catalyst for regional and economic integration and attract foreign investment.

The Governments of Central America believe that the success of the Madrid Proposal will depend on the efforts and financial support of the international community. Some support has already been provided, and we would like to express our gratitude for that. However, we would like to appeal for that important support to continue, since, as we all know, the international economic crisis has worsened as a result of the negative impact that the terrorist attacks against the United States of America have had on various sectors — in particular tourism — and on levels of employment, which in turn affects family remittances. Taken together with the drop in international prices for the main agricultural exports, including coffee, this development is harming the chances of recovery in the short term for the economies of Central America and thus making it harder to reduce poverty in the region.

In considering the characteristics of the current international situation, I would like to emphasize three main issues. First, we should not underestimate the impact that terrorism has had, and is continuing to have, on the international economy and, therefore, on the growth and development of countries. We must reaffirm our steadfast commitment to continue the fight against terrorism and related activities on the basis of commitments made in the Declaration of the Presidents, "Central America United against Terrorism", which was signed on 19 September 2001 in the Republic of Honduras. That Declaration expresses the political will of the Governments of the region to cooperate with each other and with other States in the fight against terrorism in all its manifestations, as well as to cooperate with other international bodies, such as the Organization of American States and this world Organization, in eradicating that scourge.

Secondly, we would like to underscore the efforts made in the Central American integration process,

which has taken on greater importance with the inclusion of Belize as a full member of the Central American Integration System (SICA), in December 2000, and with the conclusion of negotiations to include the Dominican Republic as an associated State of SICA. In this context, the Government of El Salvador has taken the initiative to set up binational committees with Central American countries in order to develop with each of country bilateral agendas with concrete action to promote the process of Central American integration.

Thirdly, everyone is aware of the importance of creating and strengthening economic and trade blocs in the context of the new world economy, which is characterized by globalization. In that respect, we have taken steps to formalize free trade treaties with various countries such as Canada, the United States and Panama — a country with which we have made considerable progress in our negotiations. These efforts will make it possible to increase trade flows, which will contribute to the development of our countries and improve the standard of living of our citizens.

Likewise, we must also point out the progress achieved in the process of unifying the customs system among the Republics of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In particular, we wish to mention the progress made in October 2001, when a common border control entered into force among the four countries in Peñas Blancas, Nicaragua. With this we reaffirmed the importance of consolidating the customs union process in the near future as a mechanism which will make it possible to increase trade and investment among the four countries, and which will constitute a considerable achievement on the road to regional integration.

Moreover, the Governments of Central America are aware of the benefits and obstacles of globalization for developing countries, and of the need to strengthen levels of education, training and leadership to be able to benefit from the opportunities presented by the new information technologies and free trade. It is therefore important that we incorporate the social dimension in economic globalization.

Allow me to refer now to section V of the report of the Secretary-General, the specific part entitled "The United Nations in El Salvador", in which there is an account of positive developments in the implementation and compliance with the El Salvador Peace Agreements in a difficult economic context stemming primarily from the negative effects of natural disasters and the current international economic environment. El Salvador would like to reiterate its thanks to the international community for the valuable support offered to the people and Government of our country in our efforts to fully comply with the commitments made in the Peace Agreements.

In that connection, the Government of El Salvador is pleased to announce that, with regard to the Fund for the Wounded and War-Disabled referred to by the Secretary-General in his report, efforts are being made to agree on a concrete process to develop appropriate and efficient institutional capacity for the Fund in the short term, thereby providing continuity to the spirit of the El Salvador Peace Agreements. The procedure to be agreed upon will no doubt require significant additional funds. The continued support of the international community is therefore essential for this effort to succeed. We will request such assistance in due course.

I would like to mention once again that 16 January 2002 will mark the tenth anniversary of the historic signing of the El Salvador Peace Agreements. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs stated in the general debate of the fifty-sixth session,

> "The Government of El Salvador, as a signatory party deeply interested in faithful observance of the Agreements, has been gratified to see the success achieved in executing these undertakings, putting into practice a constructive policy that has enabled us to deal with sensitive and complex issues. The members of the international community, especially the donor countries and the United Nations, can attest to this." (*A/56/PV.52, p. 4*)

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the commitment and political will of the President of the Republic, Mr. Francisco Guillermo Flores Pérez, to continue his efforts to consolidate peace, democracy, freedom and sustainable development in our country, as well as to redouble his efforts to promote Central American integration as one of the fundamental pillars for the viability of Central America and its transformation into a region of progress and well being for its peoples, in which conflict will be eliminated through a broad process of dialogue and regional cooperation.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Permanent Representative of Belgium has spoken in this debate on behalf of the European Union. My delegation fully associates itself with his statement. Nevertheless, I wish to make some additional comments because of the role Spain has played in recent years as a member of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for the Central American countries.

Spain welcomes the exemplary manner in which the elections in Nicaragua and Honduras were carried out in the month of November. We congratulate the peoples and the Governments of the two countries on the organization and smooth development of the elections, and we congratulate Presidents-elect Bolaños and Maduro.

Central American integration continues to be a goal for the region. Its expansion would help the Central American countries achieve greater economic and social progress, strengthen democracy and reinforce their institutions. The meeting of the Consultative Group for the Transformation and Modernization of Central America, which Spain had the honour of hosting in Madrid last March, was a useful instrument for considering prospects for development, integration and democratization in of the region.

Spain will continue to make whatever efforts are needed to facilitate that integration project, as it made clear at the Summit of the Central American countries and Spain, held in Madrid in March 2001, and once again at the Ibero-American Summit held recently in Lima.

Spain encourages the Central American countries to continue their efforts to find peaceful and lasting solutions to disputes that currently affect the region and impede expansion of the integration process. We also welcome the Puebla-Panama Plan, launched by Mexico, which seeks the integration of Central America and the southern states of Mexico.

Next January will mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Chapultepec Agreement, which put an end to the conflict in El Salvador and began a peace process that undoubtedly should be considered a model of success for El Salvador and its people, as well as for the United Nations. It is a perfect example of transition from a peacekeeping phase to a peace-building phase, and it deserves the congratulations of all.

Spain continues to fully support the peace process in Guatemala. It is more important today than ever to stress the need to continue and to complete the implementation of the peace agreements. Spain welcomes the commitment to the agreements made by President Portillo and encourages the political parties and all sectors of civil society to continue to be equally committed to their implementation. Dialogue between all actors is undoubtedly an essential factor for continuing to make progress.

Much remains to be done. Spain trusts that the fiscal pact will be implemented, particularly with regard to all that helps promote the population's confidence in the management of public spending.

The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala must continue, until the end of 2003, to be a useful instrument of the international community's support for the Guatemalan peace process. To that end, my delegation requests the General Assembly to extend its mandate for another year, until the end of 2002.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolutions A/56/L.42 and A/56/L.45/Rev.1 will be taken at a later date, in order to allow time for the review of their programme budget implications by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 39 (*continued*)

Towards global partnerships

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/323)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.33 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 37th plenary meeting, on 5 November. In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/56/L.33.

I give the floor to the representative of Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.33.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of introducing to the General Assembly, on

behalf of the European Union (EU) and all its sponsors, draft resolution A/56/L.33, entitled "Towards global partnerships". In addition to the 59 Member States mentioned in the draft resolution as sponsors, I am happy to inform the Assembly that Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mozambique, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Suriname, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay have also become sponsors.

The European Union held a series of informal negotiations open to all Member States. It is happy and proud to submit a draft resolution that enjoys the support and consensus of all delegations. The negotiations took place in a spirit of dialogue. I wish to express gratitude to all the delegations that participated actively and constructively in these meetings. I wish to thank in particular the delegation of Iran, representing the Group of 77, for its unfailing support for consensus and for its positive contribution throughout the negotiating process.

The EU attaches particular importance to discussions about global partnerships with civil society, particularly the private sector. We are convinced that the commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit can be achieved in 2015 only with the active, positive participation of all stakeholders in globalization — governmental and non-governmental. The general consensus reached on the draft resolution is an encouraging sign of the determination of all Members of the United Nations to recognize this potential both in the area of development issues and in the area of the defence and promotion of the values and objectives set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

The draft resolution we are submitting to the Assembly reflects this balance. Partnerships must serve development and must help eradicate poverty. But they also offer potential for promoting the general values and objectives that we identified in the Millennium Declaration and, more fundamentally, in our Charter.

Furthermore, the intention is certainly not to impose rules that are too rigid on the partnership agreements. But the draft resolution provides a series of guidelines that we believe should form the basis of any partnership. Finally, we wish to stress the need to increase the number of partnerships with private stakeholders in developing countries.

Finally, I wish particularly to thank the Secretary-General for the outstanding quality of the report he submitted to Member States on agenda item 39. It gave us a point of reference and clarified our debate about the definition and the existing types of partnerships; in short, it was the instrument of consensus that brought us together today.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.33.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.33?

Draft resolution A/56/L.33 was adopted (resolution 56/76).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President: The General Assembly will take up agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", on Friday, 14 December, in the morning, instead of on Thursday, 13 December, as originally scheduled, to consider draft resolution A/56/L.10 and the amendment thereto contained in document A/56/L.11.

At the same meeting, the Assembly will also consider a number of draft resolutions under agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", and its sub-items, as well as draft resolution A/56/L.48 under agenda item 29, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

At the same meeting, the Assembly will also consider draft resolution A/56/L.46 under agenda item 35, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The Assembly will take up item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", on the morning of Thursday, 13 December, instead of Wednesday, 12 December, in the afternoon.

On Tuesday morning, 18 December, the Assembly will take up agenda item 40, entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

On Wednesday, 19 December, in the morning, the Assembly will consider the reports of the Third Committee.

On Thursday, 20 December, in the morning, the Assembly will take up sub-item (f) of agenda item 20, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", together with agenda item 43, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.85

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 12 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Reports of the Sixth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider the reports of the Sixth Committee on agenda items 159 to 168, 170, 172 to 174, 176 and sub-item (f) of item 21.

I request the Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Mahmoud Mohmed Al-Naman of Saudi Arabia, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Sixth Committee before the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Naman (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour today of introducing to the General Assembly the reports of the Sixth Committee on the 16 agenda items allocated to it: items 159 to 168, 170, 172 to 174, 176 and sub-item (f) of item 21.

I call the Assembly's attention to agenda item 159, entitled "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/56/586. The draft resolution that the Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly is reproduced in paragraph 7 of the report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, approve the guidelines and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which provide for the award of a number of international law fellowships and travel grants both in 2002 and 2003. The Assembly would further request the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary resources to the budget for programme assistance for the next biennium.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution under item 159 without a vote. I hope the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I call the Assembly's attention to agenda item 160, entitled "Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/587 and Corr.1, and the draft resolution recommended for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property, established pursuant to resolution 55/150 of 12 December 2000, would meet from 4 to 15 February 2002. It would also request the Ad Hoc Committee to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the outcome of its work.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 161, "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fourth session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee on this agenda item is contained in document A/56/588 and Corr.1.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-69134 (E)

The Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption the three draft resolutions contained in paragraph 15 thereof and the draft decision found in paragraph 16 of the report.

Under the terms of the first draft resolution, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fourth session", the General Assembly would, inter alia, take note of the report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) on the work of its thirty-fourth session, and, after expressing its appreciation to the Commission's secretariat for the publication and distribution of the *Legislative Guide on Privately Financed Infrastructure Projects*, call upon the secretariat to ensure wide dissemination of the *Legislative Guide*, and invite States to give favourable consideration to its provisions when revising or adopting legislation in that area.

The General Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to adjust the terms of reference of the UNCITRAL Trust Fund for Symposia, so as to make it possible for the resources in the Trust Fund to be also used for the financing of training and technical assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat. It would also reaffirm the mandate of the Commission to coordinate legal activities in the field of international trade law and stress the importance of bringing into effect the conventions emanating from the work of the Commission.

Under the operative paragraphs of the second draft resolution, entitled "Model Law on Electronic Signatures of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", the General Assembly would express its appreciation to UNCITRAL for completing and adopting the Model Law on Electronic Signatures contained in the annex to the draft resolution and for preparing the Guide to Enactment of the Model Law. It would also, inter alia, recommend that all States give favourable consideration to the Model Law, together with the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, when they enact or revise their laws, in view of the need for uniformity of the law applicable to alternatives to paper-based forms of communication, storage and authentication of information.

Under the operative part of the third draft resolution entitled "United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade", the General Assembly would, after expressing its appreciation to UNCITRAL for preparing the draft Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade, adopt and open for signature or accession the Convention, which is annexed to the draft resolution, and would call upon all Governments to consider becoming party thereto.

The Sixth Committee adopted these three draft resolutions without a vote. The Assembly may wish to do so as well.

The Sixth Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft decision found in paragraph 16 of its report. Under the draft decision, the General Assembly would defer consideration of and decision on the enlargement of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law to its fifty-seventh session under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fifth session". The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 162, "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-third session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/56/589 and Corr.1, and the draft resolutions recommended to the General Assembly for adoption are contained in paragraph 10.

By draft resolution I, the General Assembly would, inter alia, express its appreciation to the International Law Commission for the work accomplished at its fifty-third session, in particular for the completion of the final draft articles on "Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts" and for the valuable work done on the issue of prevention on the topic of "International Liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law" (prevention of transboundary harm from hazardous activities).

The Assembly would also request the Commission to resume, during its fifty-fourth session, its consideration of the liability aspects of the topic "International liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law", bearing in mind the interrelationship between prevention and liability, and taking into account the developments in international law and comments by Governments.

The Assembly would also request the International Law Commission to begin to work on the topic "Responsibility of international organizations" and to give further consideration to the remaining topics to be included in its long-term programme of work.

The Assembly would reiterate the invitation to Governments to respond to the questionnaire and requests for materials on unilateral acts of States circulated by the Secretariat and to submit the most relevant national legislation, decisions of domestic courts and State practice relevant to "Diplomatic protection".

The General Assembly would furthermore decide that the next session of the Commission shall be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 April to 7 June and from 22 July to 16 August 2002.

By draft resolution II, entitled "Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts", the General Assembly would welcome the conclusion of the work of the International Law Commission on this topic and the adoption by the Commission of draft articles and a detailed commentary. The Assembly would also take note of the articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts and commend them to the attention of Governments without prejudice to the question of their future adoption or other appropriate action. Finally, the Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session an item entitled "Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts".

The draft resolutions were adopted without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly, too, will adopt the draft resolutions without a vote.

Let me now turn to agenda item 163, "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/56/590 and Corr.1. The draft resolution recommended to the Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, endorse the recommendations and conclusions of the Host Country Committee, express the view that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the normal work of the delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations and the observance of their privileges and immunities is in the interest of the United Nations and all Member States, and request the host country to continue to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of missions.

Furthermore, the Assembly would express its appreciation for the efforts made by the host country and hope that the issues raised at the meetings of the Host Country Committee will continue to be resolved in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law. It would also note that the Committee anticipates that the host country, pursuant to applicable agreements, will continue to ensure the issuance, in a timely fashion, of entry visas to representatives of Member States for the purpose of their attending official United Nations meetings, and request the host country to continue to take steps to resolve the problems relating to the parking of diplomatic vehicles in a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory way.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will be in a position to act likewise.

I now turn to the report of the Sixth Committee under agenda item 164, "Establishment of the International Criminal Court". The report is contained in document A/56/591. The draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly is found in paragraph 10 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolutions, the General Assembly would, inter alia, call upon all States that have signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to consider ratifying or acceding to it. The Assembly would also welcome the important work accomplished by the Preparatory Commission on the completion of a great number of parts of its mandate and request the Secretary-General to reconvene the Commission, in accordance with resolution F, adopted by the Rome Conference, from 8 to 19 April and from 1 to 12 July 2002 to continue to carry out the mandate of the resolution. Moreover, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to undertake the preparations necessary to convene, in accordance with article 112, paragraph 1 of the Rome Statute, the meeting of the Assembly of States Parties to be held at United Nations Headquarters upon the entry into force of the Statute.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote and it is hoped that the Assembly will do the same.

I now draw the attention of the Assembly to agenda item 165, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/56/592. The Sixth Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly two draft resolutions, which are contained in paragraph 13 of the report.

By the terms of draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization", the General Assembly would, inter alia, request the Special Committee, at its next session from 18 to 28 March 2002, to continue its consideration of all proposals concerning the question of the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations. The Special Committee would also be requested to continue to consider on a priority basis the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, by, among other things, commencing substantive debate on all of the related reports of the Secretary-General.

In addition, the Assembly would request the Special Committee to continue its work on the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and to continue to consider proposals concerning the Trusteeship Council. Furthermore, the Special Committee would be requested to continue to consider, on a priority basis, ways and means of improving its working methods and enhancing its efficiency.

By the provisions of draft resolution II, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions", the General Assembly would, inter alia, renew its invitation to the Security Council to consider the establishment of further mechanisms or procedures, as appropriate, for consultations as early as possible under Article 50 of the Charter with third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII. It would welcome the measures taken by the Security Council since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/51 and strongly recommend that the Council continue its efforts to further enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the sanctions committees. Moreover, it would invite the Council, its sanctions committees and the Secretariat to continue to ensure, as appropriate, that pre-assessment and ongoing assessment reports include analyses of the impact of sanctions on third States; that third States affected are provided opportunities to brief sanctions committees; that the Secretariat continues to provide, upon request, advice and information to third States seeking assistance; and that, in situations where economic sanctions have had severe effects on third States, a special representative could be appointed or a fact-finding mission dispatched to assess the situation. It would also request the Secretary-General to ensure that the competent units within the Secretariat develop the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities to collate and coordinate information on international assistance available to such third States.

The General Assembly would welcome the report of the Secretary-General containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting of 1998 and would request the Secretary-General to expedite the preparation of a report to the Assembly containing his views on the deliberations and main findings of that meeting.

Furthermore, the Assembly would decide to consider, within the Sixth Committee or a working group of the Committee, at its fifty-seventh session, further progress in the elaboration of effective measures aimed at the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by sanctions.

The Sixth Committee adopted these two draft resolutions without a vote. The Assembly may wish to do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 166, "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". As members know, the General Assembly decided at its current session to convene an initial debate on this item in plenary and to allocate the relevant legal and technical aspects to the Sixth Committee. The report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/56/593. The draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 11 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, strongly condemn all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever committed. In addition, the Assembly would urge all States that

have not yet done so to consider, as a matter of priority, and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), becoming parties to relevant conventions and protocols. The draft resolution would also urge States to cooperate with the Secretary-General and with one another, as well as with interested intergovernmental organizations, with a view to ensuring, where appropriate within existing mandates, that technical and other expert advice is provided to those States requiring and requesting assistance in becoming parties to the conventions and protocols previously referred to. The Assembly would also urge all States and the Secretary-General, in their efforts to prevent international terrorism, to make best use of the existing institutions of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee established by resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 should continue to elaborate a comprehensive convention as a matter of urgency and should continue its efforts to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the elaboration of a draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The Ad Hoc Committee would also keep on its agenda the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Assembly would further decide that the Ad Hoc Committee should meet from 28 January to 1 February 2002 and that the work should also continue, if necessary, during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, within the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped the Assembly will do the same.

I now turn to the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 167, "Scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel", contained in document A/56/594 and Corr.1. The draft resolution which the Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, express its deep concern regarding the increasing dangers and security risks faced by United Nations and associated personnel, in particular locally recruited personnel, at the field level, and, mindful of the need to provide the fullest possible protection for their security, would call upon all States to consider becoming parties to and to respect fully their obligations under the relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. It would also recommend that the Secretary-General continue to seek the inclusion of relevant provisions of the Convention in the status-of-forces and status-of-mission agreements concluded by the United Nations.

By operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, the Assembly would establish an Ad Hoc Committee open to all Member States or members of the specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency to consider the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on measures to strengthen and enhance the protective legal regime for United Nations and associated personnel. The Ad Hoc Committee would meet from 1 to 5 April 2002 and would submit a report on its work to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 168, "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/595 and Corr.1, and the draft decision recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is found in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide to defer to the fifty-seventh session its consideration of and a decision on the request for observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 170, "Observer status for the International Development Law Institute in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/596, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the International Development Law Institute to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 172, "Observer status for the International Hydrographic Organization in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/597 and Corr.1, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the International Hydrographic Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 173, "Observer status for the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/598 and Corr.1, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the Community to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will act in the same manner.

I now turn to agenda item 174, entitled "International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/56/599, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, decide to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to consider the elaboration of an international convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings, and would invite interested specialized agencies of the United Nations system to participate as observers. The Ad Hoc Committee would meet twice in 2002, the second time in the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee, to consider the elaboration of a mandate for the negotiation of such an international convention. The Assembly would further recommend that upon the adoption of such a negotiation mandate, it could decide to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee in order to negotiate the international convention. The Assembly would also request that the Secretary-General provide the Ad Hoc Committee with the necessary facilities to carry out its work.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 176, "Observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/600, and the draft decision recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide to defer to the fifty-seventh session its consideration of and a decision on the request for observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

I now draw your attention to agenda item 21 (f), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", which was allocated to the Sixth Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of the granting of observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly. The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/56/646, and the draft decision

recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide to defer to the fifty-seventh session its consideration of and a decision on the request for observer status for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

The most important achievement of the Sixth Committee at the fifty-sixth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly has been the adoption, without a vote, of the draft resolution on measures to eliminate international terrorism. This unanimity clearly and sincerely indicates the international community's determination to suppress this dangerous phenomenon in all its forms and manifestations, a position supported by all divine revealed religions. This common approach to the subject in the Committee provides support for the relevant declaration of the General Assembly.

Other achievements of the Sixth Committee include the adoption of the draft Convention on Assignment of Receivables in International Trade, and the draft Model Law on Electronic Signatures, adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law at its thirty-fourth session.

It was a privilege for me, as a member of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, representing the Asian Group, to be chosen for the Bureau of the Sixth Committee at the fifty-sixth session. The confidence shown by the Group, and the cooperation of the Committee members, have been a great encouragement for me in fulfilling my task as Rapporteur of the Committee.

The Kingdom's contribution to the work of the General Assembly's Committees reflects its sincere desire to share positions and views with the world community in building a mechanism for realizing the aims of the Charter. My country will continue its efforts in this regard.

In conclusion, I wish to express our gratitude to Ambassador Pierre Lelong, Chairman of the Sixth Committee, and to its Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Siddig Abdalla of the delegation of the Sudan, Mr. Alexander Marschik of the delegation of Austria, and Mr. Zsolt Hetesy of the delegation of Hungary. I also benefited from the help and cooperation of Mr. Hans Corell, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel, and the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs. Their cooperation contributed greatly to the success of this session.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Sixth Committee which are before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Sixth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Sixth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Sixth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance.

I therefore hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Sixth Committee.

Agenda item 159

United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/586)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/77).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 159?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 160

Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/587 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/78).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 160?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 161

Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fourth session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/588 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 15 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 16 of the same report.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions in paragraph 15.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fourth session".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/79).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Model Law on Electronic Signatures of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/80).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/81).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision contained in paragraph 16 of the report.

The draft decision is entitled "Enlargement of the membership of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 162

Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-third session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/589 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-third session".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/82).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful Acts".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/83).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 162?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 163

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/590 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/84).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 163?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 164

Establishment of the International Criminal Court

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/591)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Hybl (United States): The United States will not participate in the adoption of the draft resolution on the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The United States has well-known objections about the International Criminal Court, including the Court's purported ability to exercise jurisdiction over nationals of non-parties, the inclusion of the crime of aggression within the Statute of the Court, and the possibility of politically motivated prosecutions. The United States therefore believes that it would be inappropriate to join consensus on that draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/85).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 164?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 165

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/592)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 13 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/86).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions". The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/87).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 165?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 166 (*continued*)

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/593)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/88).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 166.

Agenda item 167

Scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/594 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/89).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 167?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 168

Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/595 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 168?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 170

Observer status for the International Development Law Institute in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/596)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/90).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 170?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 172

Observer status for the International Hydrographic Organization in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/597 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/91).

The Acting President: In accordance with the resolution just adopted, I now give the floor to the observer for the International Hydrographic Organization.

Mr. MacFarland: I am speaking on behalf of Rear Admiral Angrisano, President of the Directing Committee of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). Admiral Angrisano sends his regrets at not being here to address the Assembly personally on this important occasion.

The IHO is very grateful to the General Assembly for having endorsed the recommendation of the Sixth Committee to grant observer status to the IHO in the General Assembly as it appears in document A/56/597. We also wish to thank the Government of the Principality of Monaco, host country of the IHO, for taking the initiative of presenting this proposal to the Assembly.

As members know, the IHO is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization governed by a convention that was registered at the United Nations on 22 September 1970. The objectives of the organization are to coordinate the activities of national hydrographic offices, encourage the greatest possible uniformity in nautical charts, support the adoption of reliable and efficient methods of carrying out and exploiting hydrographic surveys, and advance the development of the sciences in the field of hydrography and the techniques employed in descriptive oceanography.

The IHO is fully committed to implementing United Nations resolutions related to the Law of the Sea Convention. Our work, which is aimed at achieving adequate global hydrographic data coverage, contributes significantly to the safety of navigation and to the protection of the marine environment. Without systematic collection and evaluation of the data related to coastal topography, aids to navigation, bathymetry, tides and currents, it is impossible to produce reliable navigational charts. Scientists and administrators also need adequate parameters to study and take measures for marine environmental management.

The profile of the IHO is as follows. At present, the IHO counts 70 member States, plus 8 pending. All the main maritime States are IHO members and employ thousands of personnel in their national hydrographic offices throughout the world. The survey fleet totals approximately 350 ships, plus a considerable number of survey launches and some aircraft. Forty member States provide training courses for national and international students, and one international maritime academy provides training courses for developing countries. Three member States produce a world-wide nautical chart portfolio. These are 15 regional hydrographic commissions to look after the local development of hydrography, and 20 committees and working groups to produce and update standards and develop the International Hydrographic Organization strategies.

The IHO is fully committed to the development of hydrography in regions such as Africa, Central America, the Middle East, East Asia and Eastern Europe.

The IHO membership is open to all countries, and new members are most welcome to join. The development of hydrography and charting significantly benefits countries which have under their jurisdiction sea and internal waters, supporting national and international trade and transportation. Membership also contributes to preservation of the marine environment, in view of various sustainable development activities such as tourism and exploitation of living and mineral resources.

The IHO cooperates on an ongoing basis with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and actively participates in their meetings, conferences and assemblies. We recognize the importance of the invitation made to the IHO by the United Nations membership as it appears in paragraph 33 of Assembly resolution 56/12 of 28 November 2001.

I would like to conclude by simply reiterating our thanks to the entire membership of the General Assembly for granting the IHO the observer status that will enable it to strengthen its cooperation with all interested nations.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 172?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 173

Observer status for the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/598 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/92).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 173?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 174

International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/599)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/93).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 174?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 176

Observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/600)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 176?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/56/646)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The draft decision is entitled "Observer status for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly".

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 174?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.86

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Friday, 14 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President on the occasion of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations

The President: As members know, I have just returned from Oslo, Norway, where I had the great honour to accept the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations. I was also honoured to attend that occasion along with Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who accepted the prize on his own behalf. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all the family members of the entire United Nations system and to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

Since this was the first time that the United Nations as a whole was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, I was especially pleased that the major United Nations organs and various agencies were also represented at the ceremony. I wish that all the representatives of the Member States could have been there as well. The Nobel Peace Prize belongs to each of them as much as to any other member of the United Nations family.

Surely this award is meant to offer encouragement to the men and women of the United Nations in carrying out their work. Such encouragement will be especially welcome to the thousands of United Nations personnel who serve under extremely difficult conditions, often at grave risk to themselves. While we can be justly proud of what the United Nations has accomplished, we should also look ahead to the many daunting challenges that still lie before us, such as terrorism, poverty, drug abuse and trafficking, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation. These challenges cannot be met by any single Member State or by any single organization alone.

Since 1945, the international community and the peoples of the world have exerted their best efforts, often with high hopes, for the realization of global peace and well-being through the United Nations. Our efforts have not always been successful or our successes always permanent, but we should not be discouraged. I have no doubt that, were it not for the United Nations, humankind could hardly have advanced as far as it has in realizing the vision of the United Nations founding fathers in 1945. The indispensable role of the United Nations was clearly recognized by Chairman Berge of the Norwegian Nobel Committee at the award ceremony in the following words: "The only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

Finally, let me mention that I will closely consult with the representatives of the major organs and Member States about how to utilize the prize money which the United Nations has received from the Nobel Committee.

In concluding my brief report, I join with representatives in celebrating the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize as both recognition of past achievements and a spur to even greater efforts in the future.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-69700 (E)

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Draft resolution (A/56/L.10)

Amendment (A/56/L.11)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this item at its 30th plenary meeting, on 22 October.

I call on the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.10.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Australia, in its capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has the honour to introduce the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA, as contained in document A/56/L.10.

The draft resolution is sponsored by 50 countries, as follows: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Yugoslavia.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues to make a vital contribution to international security. The Agency plays a key role in our collective efforts to achieve the twin goals of peace and development by ensuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are shared globally, by building and maintaining a global nuclear safety regime and by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring the security of nuclear material and facilities.

Following the tragic events of 11 September, the work of the IAEA has taken on even greater significance, as Member States have become united in their concern about terrorism and in their recognition of the important role of the IAEA in providing an international response to increased risks of nuclear terrorism. Through the General Assembly's annual resolution on the report of the IAEA, we are able to take note of the Agency's important work and to affirm our confidence in its role in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The draft resolution we are introducing today is the product of an exhaustive process of open-ended negotiation among delegations in Vienna — where Member States' expertise on nuclear issues is focused — and subsequent, equally exhaustive consultations in New York. The approach taken among experts in Vienna in drawing up the draft resolution was to draw on agreed language from previous substantive General Assembly resolutions on the IAEA, updated and amended as necessary to take account of the outcomes of the most recent session of the IAEA General Conference, which was held, as the Assembly is aware, in September 2001. The draft resolution is a faithful reflection of the Agency's work and the General Conference resolutions.

As many delegations stated during the consideration of this agenda item last year, it was disappointing that the General Assembly was unable at its fifty-fifth session to adopt a substantive resolution on the work of the IAEA. This was particularly so, given that the Agency itself has a long history of making decisions in Vienna on the basis of consensus. Many States have therefore worked hard in Vienna and New York to ensure that a substantive resolution could be adopted by the General Assembly this year. Significant investments have been made in the draft resolution, with hard compromises made on key issues such as integrated safeguards, the role of innovative nuclear technology and the safe transport of radioactive material.

In view of the comprehensive and transparent process of consultation which has taken place in Vienna and New York, it is the strong wish of the 50 sponsors of the draft resolution, and of the Director General of the IAEA, that the draft resolution be adopted as it stands, without further amendment. We look forward to the Assembly's support for the draft resolution and its endorsement of the important work of the IAEA.

The President: I now call on the representative of Iraq to introduce the draft amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation has presented a draft amendment, contained in document A/56/L.11, to the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which would be inserted as a new paragraph after paragraph 12.

We fully understand that this draft resolution is the result of consultations in Vienna and that there were other delegations that had wished to amend it in ways that would reflect their interests. Despite our strong reservations with regard to paragraph 12 of the draft resolution, which demands that Iraq implement relevant Security Council resolutions, with which Iraq has actually complied throughout the past decade, my delegation did not object to its inclusion, for the sake of reaching consensus and adopting a substantive draft resolution.

However, considering the draft resolution an unbalanced and selective document that neglects the verification activities carried out in Iraq by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), my delegation presented its draft amendment. The draft amendment is actually a quotation from what the IAEA states in its reports to the General Assembly and to the Security Council regarding the IAEA's implementation of the safeguards agreement in Iraq, referred to in documents S/2000/300, S/2001/337, S/2001/26, S/2001/129 and S/2000/120 and in the IAEA report presented to the current session of the General Assembly contained in document A/56/313. From among these, I would like to quote from a letter dated 10 April 2000 from the Director General of the IAEA addressed to the President of the Security Council:

> "As I informed the IAEA Board of Governors during its recent meeting, the Agency inspectors were able to verify the nuclear material subject to safeguards, which consists of low enriched, natural and depleted uranium. Iraq provided the necessary cooperation for the inspection team to perform its activities effectively and efficiently". *(S/2000/300, p. 3)*

This fact was stated in the resolution concerning Iraq recently adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA in Vienna, contained in document GC(45)/RES/17.

I hope that the General Assembly will decide that the main element in considering this draft resolution should be transparency, not selectivity that would reflect the political agenda of one or two States. Representatives should be careful not to set the precedent of a political resolution that would not send the right message to the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We should not forget that we are talking about the cornerstone of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which carries out the safeguards agreements between Member States and the IAEA. We hope that representatives will support our draft amendment, which simply reflects what the IAEA reports have stated regarding this matter.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia on a point of order.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I should like, on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.10, to raise a point of order in connection with the amendment contained in A/56/L.11. On behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, I formally move, under the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that no action be taken on that amendment. I should also like to request a recorded vote.

Draft resolution A/56/L.10 is the product of an intensive, transparent negotiating process, which took place among experts in Vienna over many weeks. The process included many open-ended meetings at which all delegations were given ample opportunity to present and defend their proposals. The amendment proposed in document A/56/L.11, which was introduced by Iraq, was considered during that exhaustive consultative process. At the conclusion of that process there was no agreement to incorporate that amendment proposal.

In New York, open-ended consultations were also convened, and delegations had a further opportunity to present and defend amendment proposals. No agreement was reached for the further amendment of the draft resolution, which is widely viewed as reflecting a fair compromise, after weeks of negotiation among experts. This draft resolution is traditionally based on the resolutions adopted at the annual General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. This year's draft was again based on the principle, accepted by all during the consultative process, that the United Nations General Assembly draft resolution should be faithful to the resolutions of the IAEA General Conference. The amendment proposed by Iraq does not accord with the relevant General Conference resolution on Iraq, resolution GC(45)/RES/17.

Bearing in mind the fact that the draft resolution is the product of a comprehensive and transparent process of negotiation, the sponsors believe that a no-action motion on the proposed amendment in A/56/L.11 would be the best means of ensuring that the substantive draft resolution, in its current form, is adopted by the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session. We therefore hope that the no-action motion will be supported.

The President: The representative of Australia has moved, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11. Rule 74 reads as follows:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

Mr. Coutts (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile believes that the draft resolution in A/56/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", is the outcome of a broad and transparent negotiation process, carried out in both Vienna and New York. Given this fact, we believe that taking no action on the proposal contained in document A/56/L.11 would be the most appropriate way for the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, in its current form.

For that reason, we second the no-action motion put forward by the representative of Australia.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union would like to recall that it attaches great importance to the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a result, we sincerely hope that the substantive draft resolution in A/56/L.10, which is before the Assembly today, will shortly be adopted in its current form.

For reasons that have just been set out by the delegation of Australia, the European Union would like to express its unreserved support for the no-action motion with regard to the draft amendment in A/56/L.11 — the motion just made by the delegation of Australia on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution. We call on delegations to vote in favour of the motion to take no action so that draft resolution A/56/L.10 can be voted upon in its current form.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation would like to ask delegations to vote against the no-action motion that is intended to deprive a Member State of its right to express its position with regard to a draft resolution and to introduce a paragraph that would reflect the simple truth, as expressed in the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency on its activities carried out in Iraq.

I hope that delegations will take a stand against the introduction into the General Assembly of a veto that is designed to achieve political ends.

Miss Thomas (Jamaica): While taking into consideration the arguments that have been put forward, my delegation believes that, on a point of principle, any Member State has a right to have its proposals considered. While we do not necessarily support the substance of A/56/L.11, we believe that any Member State has the right to present a proposal. We therefore oppose the no-action motion.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the motion by the representative of Australia that no action be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia,

Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Against:

Algeria, Cuba, Jamaica, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Botswana, China, Djibouti, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Togo, Venezuela, Zambia

The motion for no action was carried by 96 votes to 7, with 20 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Since the motion for no action has carried, no action will be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

We shall therefore take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.10.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.10.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Marcus (United States of America): Paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 does not reflect what was agreed at the General Conference in a balanced way and is thus objectionable. Agreements reached in Vienna should be respected as we pursue our efforts in New York. We regret that this has not been the case.

Mr. Govrin (Israel): Israel attaches great importance to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to the tradition of consensus in this Organization.

The report of the IAEA, which reflects the work of the Agency, taking into consideration efforts made by the Members of the Organization to promote the important tasks of the Agency, should also reflect agreed language. Unfortunately, the wording of paragraph 10 of the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA does not reflect that cooperative spirit.

The draft resolutions on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East have been adopted by consensus since 1991. Their language represents a delicate balance reached after long and difficult negotiations aimed at achieving consensus. Israel has joined that consensus because we support the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in due course, notwithstanding certain reservations regarding the modalities.

Paragraph 10 of the draft resolution on the IAEA report represents the General Conference resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East in a selective and unbalanced way. Paragraph 10 contains some components from the resolution, but ignores others. This attempt to introduce a new interpretation of the compromise consensus resolution on the Middle East is unacceptable, and may damage the common understanding required for reaching consensus on this issue.

Israel will vote against paragraph 10 of the draft resolution.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The core element of the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which was reached on 21 October 1994, is the provision of light-water reactors by the United States on the condition of a freeze on our nuclear activities.

Seven years have passed since the adoption of the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. During this period, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been fully carrying out its obligations under the Agreed Framework, including freezing our graphite-moderated reactors. However, the United States is not implementing the Agreed Framework in good faith. The project for the light-water reactors, which is to be finished by 2003, is only at the ground-excavation phase.

The United States is not providing due compensation for our loss of electricity resulting from the delay in constructing light-water reactors; it would rather take up the issue of inspections. This cannot be

construed as anything but an attempt to impose upon us the blame for the delay in the construction of the light-water reactors and to scrap the Agreed Framework. However, the draft resolution ignores the essence of the issue and arbitrarily forces my country to implement the safeguards agreement. A safeguards agreement is not a matter to be implemented by using pressure. The solution to the issue lies in the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework.

My delegation would once again like to make clear its position that the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is not a matter to be addressed at the United Nations, but rather one to be settled between the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea and the United States. My delegation will therefore vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.10.

Mr. Mehta (India): India, a founding member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), attaches the highest importance and value to the objectives of the Agency. Since draft resolution A/56/L.10 pertains to the activities of the IAEA, we will go along with it. Nevertheless, we have considerable difficulty with the third preambular paragraph.

The language in that paragraph appears to link adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the freedom of research, development, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The statute of the IAEA, which must guide all our deliberations on the activities of the Agency, calls on the Agency to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Furthermore, the statute stresses the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. The purpose of those provisions in the statute of the IAEA is obviously to encourage unfettered access of Member States to the peaceful uses of atomic energy without any discrimination whatsoever, albeit with appropriate safeguards.

The IAEA statute predates the NPT. Also, the Agency has not been designated secretariat of the NPT. The Agency merely carries out safeguards activities with the various member States in accordance with agreements; and the concept of safeguards itself predates the NPT. The NPT is not an equitable Treaty. Also, the provisions of article VI of the NPT have not been fulfilled by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. The NPT should therefore not be used to discriminate between members of the IAEA. By implying that adherence to the NPT — on which my Government's views are well known — alone would mean access to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, the draft resolution deviates from and, in fact, derogates the objectives enshrined in the statute of the IAEA.

We have therefore been constrained to call for a vote on the third preambular paragraph, and shall vote against it.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation regrets that its draft amendment has not been adopted by the General Assembly. It would have reflected the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq as mentioned in IAEA documents. Considering the current unbalanced state of the draft resolution, my delegation has no choice but to ask for a separate vote on paragraph 12, in view of the fact that Iraq has fully complied with all its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

I should like to quote from paragraph 35 of the report of IAEA to the Security Council dated 27 July 1998 (S/1998/694):

> "As previously recorded, there are no indications of Iraq having retained any physical capability for the indigenous production of weapon-usable nuclear material in amounts of any practical significance, nor any indication Iraq has acquired or produced weapon-usable nuclear material other than the nuclear material verified by IAEA and removed from Iraq in accordance with paragraph 13 of resolution 687 (1991)."

I therefore would ask representatives to support my delegation and, given the facts I have mentioned earlier, vote against paragraph 12 of the draft resolution before us.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

Separate votes have been requested on the third preambular paragraph, operative paragraph 5, operative paragraph 10 and operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

If there is no objection, we will therefore proceed accordingly.

I now put to the vote the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Pakistan

The third preambular paragraph was retained by 127 votes to 2, with 6 abstentions.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, India, Pakistan, Syrian Arab Republic

Operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 130 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 136 votes to 2.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Zambia

Operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 119 votes to none, with 14 abstentions.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft, Suriname has become a co-sponsor of A/56/L.10.

I now put to the vote draft resolution A/56/L.10 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Draft resolution 56/94 was adopted by 150 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/94).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor after the vote on draft resolution A/56/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", to explain Pakistan's position on the third preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5. My delegation abstained in the voting on those paragraphs.

The language of the third preambular paragraph, which links the right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is not acceptable to us. Since Pakistan is not a party to the NPT, we cannot accept any commitment on its behalf.

Similarly, we recorded our reservations on language in the first part of operative paragraph 5, which reads in part as follows:

> "bearing in mind the importance of achieving the universal application of the safeguards system of the Agency, urges all States which have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible".

In our view, the International Atomic Energy Agency's role is to facilitate the technical safeguards and not to indulge in taking political decisions.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of resolution 56/94, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", as a whole. The Chinese delegation is of the view that the Agency has done a great deal of fruitful work and achieved significant progress in many areas over the past year for which we wish to express our appreciation.

The Chinese delegation wishes to explain its position on the following issues.

With respect to the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Chinese Government's principled position on this question remains unchanged. We have always supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the maintenance of peace and stability there. The parties

concerned need to seek an appropriate solution to the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through constructive dialogue, consultations and good-faith cooperation. The countries concerned also need to pursue their dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the basis of equality and mutual respect and to faithfully implement the relevant Agreement.

As regards Iraq, the Chinese delegation is of the view that the prolongation of the problem without resolution has aggravated the humanitarian crisis there and is not conducive to the peace and stability of the Gulf region. The relevant resolutions of the Security Council should be implemented fully and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected. China calls for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq as soon as possible on the basis of an objective assessment of Iraq's implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba has again this year voted in favour of the resolution on the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our support reflects the great importance that Cuba attaches to the Agency's work.

As we said in the debate on this subject some weeks ago, Cuba highly appreciates the IAEA's work and achievements in the area of technical assistance and cooperation, safeguards and nuclear safety. At the same time, we regret that the resolution includes controversial language that does not enjoy the support of all delegations.

For technical and political reasons, the General Assembly should not become a forum for the reproduction of debates on sensitive issues considered by the States members of the IAEA. Reopening such debates in the General Assembly is technically inappropriate because many delegations in New York cannot give rigorous follow-up to the debates held in Vienna and therefore do not have all the background information needed to reopen in this forum serious negotiations on highly sensitive issues.

Even more important than the technical considerations, however, we believe that, from the political standpoint, the voting that is traditionally held when action is taken on resolutions devoted to the Agency's annual report does not contribute positively to the work of the IAEA. Many international organizations that submit reports to the United Nations consider in their own forums controversial issues on which divisions exist among their member States. However, the resolutions that we adopt here on those organizations do not reproduce the controversial aspects and are adopted without a vote. We do not believe that the resolution on the IAEA's report should be an exception to the rule.

That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 12 and would have abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 11 if it had been submitted to a separate vote. Cuba voted against the motion of no action on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11 because we felt that it prevented Member States from exercising their legitimate right to express their position on a highly relevant substantive issue in the context of the draft resolution under consideration.

The third preambular paragraph establishes a link between the rights of States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and their adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Cuba's position on the NPT is well known. We believe that it is selective and discriminatory in its essence, which establishes two categories of States with different rights and obligations and legitimizes the possession of nuclear weapons by one group of countries. For all these reasons, Cuba did not support the wording in the third preambular paragraph and abstained in the voting on it.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 56/94 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our position reflects our conviction that the resolution constitutes a basis for the strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards regime, which in turn is a means of maintaining international security.

However, my delegation expresses its concerns and fear that the constant precedence accorded to the development of the safeguards regime over other programmes of the Agency will upset the balance sought by the developing countries in the Agency's programmes and budget. It should be noted that the General Assembly is not entitled to define the priorities of the Agency's work, which is the prerogative of the IAEA Board of Governors.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 14?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/56/L.48)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 58th and 59th plenary meetings, on 19 November 2001.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.48.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.48?

Draft resolution A/56/L.48 was adopted (resolution 56/95).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 29.

Agenda item 35 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/56/L.46)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 83rd plenary meeting, on 11 December 2001.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.46.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors: Cyprus, Ethiopia, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Venezuela.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.46?

Draft resolution A/56/L.46 was adopted (resolution 56/96).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Madej (Poland): I am speaking on behalf of the members of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, namely, Chile, the Czech Republic, India, Mali, Mexico, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of South Africa, the United States of America and my own country, Poland, to welcome the adoption of the resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The United Nations system as a whole continues to play a substantial role in providing timely, coherent and adequate support for Member States in their efforts to achieve democratization and good governance. Consolidating and promoting democratic principles and practices, in particular in new or restored democracies, should remain one of the main tasks of the Organization.

The Convening Group of the Community of Democracies particular note of the observation of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 33 of his report (A/56/499) on the issue that two international forums — namely, the Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies — play an important role in mobilizing the political will for advancing democratic values, principles and practices and ensuring that the lessons learned from democratization processes in various parts of the world will not be lost by future generations.

Ms. Tobing-Klein (Suriname): Suriname is very satisfied with the debate on agenda item 35 and its outcome, regarding the strengthening and consolidation of democracy, peace, security and the rule of law in our countries. Suriname attaches great importance to the strengthening and consolidation of new or restored democracies, and congratulates Benin and the international community on the important Cotonou Declaration.

The experiences of Suriname, after the past serious disruptions of our democratic system, have taught us that continued attention and action are needed to develop and maintain a true democratic culture in

which, peace, security, respect for human rights, good governance and the rule of law can prevail. Suriname has therefore paid special attention in its Multi-Annual Development Plan for 2001-2005 to democracy, good governance, and the restoration and rehabilitation of democratic order and a constitutional State. A true partnership between Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations is indeed a condition sine qua non for the realization of these noble goals.

In the preparatory process for its participation in the important Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly meetings in Costa Rica and Peru earlier this year, Suriname organized a broad consultation with organizations for women, youth, churches, entrepreneurs, trade unions and human rights institutions to discuss the draft Inter-American Democratic Charter. Suriname was one of the countries that adopted by acclamation the Democratic Charter at the twenty-eighth special session of the OAS in Lima, Peru, on 11 September 2001.

Suriname is very pleased at the central role of democracy in that Charter, in which democracy and its relationship to human rights, integral development and the war on poverty are crucial. In addition, Suriname welcomes the protection provided to member countries by the provisions of the Democratic Charter in the event of disruption or unconstitutional alteration of democratic order.

In conclusion, Suriname is grateful for the generous support we are receiving from the international community, including the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the OAS and countries such as the Netherlands, for the process of democratization and the consolidation of our democratic institutions.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia on a point of order.

Mr. Stuart (Australia): We raised our flag earlier as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the delegation of Benin, on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We had signed the lists of sponsors held by the delegation of Benin and the Secretariat. We are puzzled that we do not appear as a sponsor and hope that this can be rectified in the record of the meeting.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Benin on a point of order.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I would like to recall, for the benefit of the Secretariat, that when I introduced the draft resolution during the preceding meeting, we provided a list of the names of all of the countries that were kind enough to sponsor the draft resolution. I should like, therefore, to stress that the names of all of the countries that we mentioned earlier, which are sponsors of the draft resolution, should appear in document A/56/L.46/Rev.1 when it is issued.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Draft resolution (A/56/L.41/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 81st and 82nd plenary meetings on 10 December 2001.

The Assembly will take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay and Tonga.

Are there any other sponsors? Yemen indicates that it wishes to be included as a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 56/97).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Draft resolution (A/56/L.43)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate under agenda item 21 and its sub-items (a) to (m) at its 77th to 80th plenary meetings, on 6 and 7 December 2001.

I give the floor to the representative of Jamaica to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.43.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour to present the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", contained in document A/56/L.43, further to the statement I made on behalf of the Group under agenda item 21 in connection with the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/171.

I would like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Chile and the Dominican Republic.

This draft resolution, which is presented biennially to the General Assembly, aims at encouraging greater cooperation in support of economic and social development in the region between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes, particularly the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. It is essentially an update of resolution 54/8, which was adopted by consensus during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution, reference is made, inter alia, to the Agreement between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, in which both parties agree to strengthen and expand their cooperation in matters that are of common concern in the field of their respective competence, further to their constitutional instruments. Reference is also made to the joint activities that SELA is developing with the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system. Finally, the preamble welcomes the continued monitoring and changes in the treatment of topics relating to the United Nations system, in close contact with the delegations of Member States participating in such deliberations.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly will urge the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to continue deepening its coordination and mutual support with SELA. It will also urge the United Nations Development Programme to continue its financial and technical cooperation programmes that the Permanent Secretariat of SELA is carrying out in areas of mutual interest and concern. Lastly, it will urge the specialized agencies and other funds and programmes of the United Nations system to continue and intensify their support for, and cooperation in the activities of, SELA.

In operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly reiterates its request that both the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Permanent Secretary of SELA assess the implementation of the Agreement between the two bodies and report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Finally, in operative paragraph 6 the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

I wish to conclude by commending to the General Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.43 for adoption by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.43.

Before proceeding to take action, I should like to announce that the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.43: Dominica, Guatemala, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.43?

Draft resolution A/56/L.43 was adopted (resolution 56/98).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/56/3 and Add.1 and 2)

The President: The General Assembly will now consider agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", in accordance with its decision adopted at the 43rd plenary meeting, on 9 November 2001.

I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (spoke in French): On 9 November 2001, the General Assembly decided to place on its agenda the consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2001. The Economic and Social Council welcomes that decision, which is indeed a historical one.

Contrary to what is customarily done for the other two main bodies — the Security Council and the International Court of Justice — hitherto the General Assembly dealt with the annual report of the Economic and Social Council in a piecemeal fashion. Although the Assembly dealt directly with a limited number of issues, it nonetheless entrusted the consideration of most of this report to its main committees, primarily the Second Committee, the Third Committee and the Fifth Committee.

That approach, admittedly, did have one major benefit, which we welcomed: it ensured a certain degree of efficiency from a sectoral perspective. However, it is also true — and regrettable — that over the years that approach contributed to blurring the image of the Economic and Social Council, because it did not allow for an overall perception of its work or for an understanding of its strategic approaches.

The General Assembly, in deciding to consider the report of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the Charter, not only set out to restore a proper balance to the situation, but also — and most importantly — made clear, through this decisive act, its desire to become actively involved in the process of renewal and revitalization of the work of the Council, begun a few years ago.

On behalf of the President of the Economic and Social Council, I should like sincerely to thank the Assembly and to express our gratitude to it for this decision.

The Assembly will recall that last year the heads of State or Government welcomed the renewed dynamism of the Economic and Social Council, which is much more in keeping with the mandate entrusted to it under the Charter. The Assembly's decision to give due consideration to our report is indeed deeply appreciated by our heads of State.

The Economic and Social Council is entrusted with providing general guidance to those bodies of the United Nations system that are charged with the promotion of economic and social development, and also with coordinating their activities. The Council also coordinates the follow-up of the outcome of major international conferences in the economic and social fields and in other related areas.

That is why the Economic and Social Council has devoted considerable time and effort to the systematic follow-up of the development strategies emanating from the major conferences and summit meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations in the 1990s, including the decisions taken in the context of the five-year follow-up to these meetings.

The role of the Council has also been pivotal in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions flowing from international conferences from the integration of women and human settlements.

It is against that backdrop that the Economic and Social Council undertook more closely to supervise its technical committees by emphasizing coordinated follow-up of these major conferences. Closer links between the Council and its technical bodies have allowed for a more coherent approach and for more efficient and effective methods of work.

The working relationship between the Council and the five regional economic commissions has also been better defined. A dialogue with their respective Executive Secretaries on a specific topic is held every year, and their contribution is increasingly enriching the work of the Economic and Social Council.

In keeping with its mandate, the Council in recent years has spared no effort in bringing together all of the development partners, with a view to enhancing cooperation and to harmonizing the policies of the various United Nations bodies, in order to maximize their results in the area of development and, more specifically, in the area of the combat against poverty, whose eradication remains our top priority.

This prioritization of the combat against poverty and underdevelopment has placed Africa at the very centre of the concerns of the Economic and Social Council, which has devoted a large part of its work to that continent, undertaking a detailed examination of the reasons for Africa's economic backwardness and endeavouring to identify ways and means of integrating it into an increasingly competitive global economy.

The special attention accorded to the situation of Africa reached its apex last July. During the high-level segment of its substantive session, the Economic and Social Council undertook to reflect on the role that the United Nations system — that is, we the Member States — should play in order effectively to support Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development. In keeping with the guidelines set out by the heads of State or Government in the Millennium Declaration, the Economic and Social Council subsequently adopted a Ministerial Declaration setting out specific measures to be taken by the international community to foster Africa's development.

The General Assembly should give equitable and appropriate consideration to that Declaration, which is one of the key elements of the report before the Assembly. As a leading international body in the area of economic and social issues, the Council contributed to the mobilizing, along with States, of the heads of the financial institutions and of the specialized agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and all the other development partners, in support of the new African initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The report before the Assembly contains compelling proposals regarding the implementation of that initiative.

The Council has played a major role in drawing the attention of international organizations to the importance of information and communication technologies in development efforts, based on the 2000 ministerial declaration on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based economy.

Following the impetus given by the Economic and Social Council, a working group on information and communication technologies was set up here at United Nations Headquarters on 20 November last, during a ceremony at which we had the honour and privilege, Sir, of your presence.

We have been monitoring more closely the implementation of policies by United Nations funds and programmes in the context of their operational activities and thus assisted the General Assembly in its triennial consideration of operational activities.

The institutionalization of a debate on humanitarian affairs, pursuant to resolution 52/12 B, has made possible the consideration of broader general policy issues in this field.

Globalization, and its various forms it takes, has become one of the determining factors in decision-making processes at both the national and international levels. Accordingly, the Economic and Social Council has contributed to the creation of fresh opportunities and new ways for the many stakeholders to become involved in the promotion of development.

For instance, the Council has played a central role in the promotion of cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions. Since 1998, a special high-level meeting devoted to financing and development issues has been held each year among representatives of the Council and of the Bretton Woods institutions. This year's high-level meeting, held on 1 May, was particularly useful. In the debates in plenary and at the two round tables, participants engaged in a very broad and deep exchange of views on urgent and painful problems of development. A summary of that debate is contained in the report.

Similarly, the Economic and Social Council organizes an annual dialogue on general policy issues with the heads of international financial and trade institutions in order to take stock of the world economic situation. The Council also organizes thematic meetings with representatives of specialized

agencies and meetings devoted to considering the decisions adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

The Council's ability to bring together representatives of Governments, bodies of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector to discuss and debate economic and social issues is now fully recognized. The Council's preparation and organization of high-level debates are exemplary in that regard. The preparation for the high-level segments include the convening of a series of information meetings and round tables. In these preparatory meetings, representatives of Governments and the public sector participate alongside those of the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

At the 2001 substantive session, the Council was confirmed in its conviction that, if its work is to result in success, civil society as a whole must be involved. Thus, the African Forum for Investment Promotion, held in 2001 in parallel with the high-level segment, brought together African ministers, representatives of African private companies and trade unions, investors and the representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and of regional and subregional development bodies.

The forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which was also convened in parallel with the high-level segment, brought together for the first time an impressive number of organizations dedicated to finding the best possible way for the international community to assist Africa to achieving sustainable development. The commitment of NGOs to the work of the Economic and Social Council was reflected in the recent convening in Dakar of the first seminar on the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted in July 2001. This is an opportune moment to welcome the imminent establishment in Tunis of informal NGO networks to cover each of the major regions of the world. These networks will allow all agencies of civil society not only to be better informed of the Organization's work, but also and above all to contribute to its success and perpetuation. The Dakar seminar was eloquent testimony to that effect.

As can be seen, the Council has been able in many respects to discharge its duties effectively. However, it is aware that, due to a number of new developments, it must continuously reconsider substantive issues and procedures. Thus will it remain at the forefront of the debate on world development. Given these considerations, the Council decided to follow up on the commitment made by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration to further strengthen itself and to capitalize on its recent successes so as to play to the full the role assigned to it by the Charter. That commitment will be the subject of next year's debate on coordination questions.

Without wishing to pre-empt the conclusions to be reached by the Council or the recommendations to be made by the General Assembly following its consideration of this item, I would mention certain key concepts to guide the next phase of the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

First of all, I would suggest that the Council play an even more prominent role in the debate on globalization to be undertaken by the intergovernmental bodies. Given its responsibility in the economic, social and related spheres, we feel that the Council is in a position to draw attention to all the essential aspects of the debate on development. The Council also plays a leading role in the follow-up to United Nations conferences and is thus naturally in a position to enhance that role over the next two years. Members will recall that several highly important conferences, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, are scheduled for that period. Moreover, the Council's role in the support to be offered to the General Assembly with respect to the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration will have to be specified.

Secondly, I feel it necessary to suggest that the Council consider in greater depth the socio-economic aspects of conflict prevention, reconstruction, post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building not only to strengthen the dialectic relationship between peace and development, but also to ensure improved coordination of work in that field. Such activities could also offer new opportunities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

Thirdly, we must strive to increase the impact of the Council's work on all the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system.

The Council has proved to be a unique forum that bring together senior officials and the heads of various sectoral ministries to discuss issues of common interest. However, additional arrangements should be made to develop this dialogue and ensure that such debates and exchanges of views, as well as their conclusions, will also be at the centre of discussions within intergovernmental bodies, such as the General Assembly's Second and Third Committees. This, of course, should in no way reflect on the value of an open and frank debate that does not necessarily lead to the adoption of agreed conclusions.

More attention should also be given to our relationships with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and national bodies, in particular national economic and social councils, so that the Economic and Social Council will be able to fulfil its guiding role with regard to development. As I said earlier, the success of the African Forum for Investment Promotion and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations has strengthened our belief in the importance of the contribution of these development actors to the United Nations in the new millennium.

Fourthly, it is important not only to develop policies coherently in the economic, social and related fields, but also to ensure coordination, in particular between the Council and its subsidiary bodies, the development bodies of the United Nations system and the other stakeholders, and also among the principal organs of the Organization. The meetings of the Bureaux of these organs, supported by the Secretary-General, are certainly important but can in no way replace Member States in the role of offering constructive observations on the Council's report.

In this regard, the Assembly's consideration of the Council's report today is, in my view, of great importance that is not only symbolic, because the debate will be devoted to fundamental issues. This consideration should confirm the usefulness of the work of the Social and Economic Council, particularly in 2001, and will be a valuable guide as we pursue efforts to improve further the work of the Council and identify new areas to explore.

These are the observations I felt duty-bound to make as the General Assembly takes up for the first time its consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the other associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, associate themselves with this statement.

The General Assembly is called upon today to debate the report submitted by the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/56/3. The Assembly does so in the spirit of one of the first of the purposes and principles established by the Charter of the United Nations, set out in Article 1, paragraph 3:

> "To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The Economic and Social Council is the key United Nations body as regards sustainable economic and social development, and therefore its report deserves the closest possible attention. The EU fully supported the approach adopted by Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, President of the Economic and Social Council, to have item 12 and the entire Council report addressed in plenary. We welcome this new procedure, which gives a somewhat higher profile to the status and importance of the decisions taken by the Council.

Let me return briefly to the Council's summer session in order to highlight the salient points. First of all, the European Union welcomes the fact that the Economic and Social Council devoted its principal debate to Africa, under the theme "The role of the United Nations system in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development". The African continent is one of the European Union's priorities; indeed, the EU is Africa's single largest donor and its leading trading partner.

Some aspects of this African debate are being pursued further in the General Assembly. The Union is pleased that the African heads of State launched the New African Initiative (NAI) this summer. We also welcome the decision taken in October to incorporate this initiative into the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Africa is on the way to taking better

charge of its own development and its own future. The EU will support these efforts.

We welcome the quality of the debate held in the coordination segment last summer concerning technologies and public-private partnerships. The Assembly, under agenda item 39, was able to pursue this dialogue on global partnerships, taking the Council's agreed conclusions into account. This thematic interaction between the Council and the General Assembly is a most promising development and should be encouraged.

In another, equally fundamental area — the operational activities segment — the Economic and Social Council initiated a discussion on the triennial review of the operational activities of the various United Nations funds and programmes. This made for an open-ended discussion with the heads of the agencies concerned of the major trends and new ideas connected with the triennial review. The EU believes that the Economic and Social Council is the body best placed to coordinate operational activities for development, in particular on cross-sectoral or thematic issues.

The humanitarian segment is an essential part of the Council's coordination mandate. The EU reaffirms its full commitment to greater coordination of efforts in order to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, whether in natural disasters or in response to complex crises. The European Union attaches particular importance to aid given to internally displaced persons. Therefore, we welcome the unanimous support of Council members for the creation of a unit within the Secretariat to look after their specific needs.

In this context, efforts have been made to encourage and stimulate improved coordination and communication between the major bodies involved in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, in particular the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The goal is to ensure effective support on the part of Member States for an integrated approach to the problem. The International Peace Academy recently organized a seminar on this subject in which representatives of 30 Member States took part. The conclusions of the seminar were officially transmitted to the Assembly in document A/56/607. The European Union believes that we must examine more closely issues of closer interaction and improved information-sharing between the two bodies so as to promote an integrated approach to strengthening peace and post-conflict reconstruction. We must do our utmost to ensure for those affected by conflict that there is an intergovernmental process here in New York capable of having a real and positive impact on their lives.

The European Union expresses its satisfaction with regard to the way in which the Council's human rights activities evolved during the general segment. The Council was able to adopt, without a vote, a series of decisions taken in the Commission on Human Rights. After lengthy negotiations, it was able to respond, positively and by consensus, to the request of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for a debate on the question of Myanmar's compliance with the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) of 1930. The credibility of both the Council and the ILO were at stake in that regard.

The European Union would like to take the opportunity provided by today's debate in plenary meeting to call on the Assembly to respond in a positive manner to the specific recommendation of the Council for a fundamental review, in the General Assembly, of the procedures for considering and following up on major United Nations conferences with regard to both format and frequency. The Council adopted a consensus resolution on the integrated follow-up to the major conferences and on the working methods of the functional committees. This question must also be discussed here in the General Assembly. We therefore support the proposal to include the question of follow-up to major conferences on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

Next year, the Economic and Social Council will consider the important issue of human resources for development, in particular the measures to be taken in relation to education and health. The European Union is determined to make a constructive and positive contribution to consideration of these problems.

The European Union remains deeply committed to the process of revitalizing and gradually strengthening the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council. The European Union supports the initiatives aimed at ensuring coordination and consistency between economic and social questions during, for example, the special annual meeting

between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. As a major Charter body, the Economic and Social Council must be in a position effectively to discharge its lofty task. That was one of the fundamental commitments undertaken last year in the Millennium Declaration. In this connection, we welcome the choice of the theme of the coordination segment that has been selected for next year. It will provide an opportunity to reconsider, in a substantial manner, the working methods of the Economic and Social Council.

Finally, the European Union regrets the fact that work on a number of decisions and agenda items was not finalized during the substantive session in July. It is equally regrettable that the decisions and conclusions of subsidiary bodies are sometimes called into question. The Economic and Social Council is responsible for coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the economic and social area; it is not a court of appeal.

Mr. Simonović (Croatia): It is a great honour for me to speak on the issue of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2001, given the fact that this is the first time in the history of the United Nations that it is being debated in plenary meeting in the General Assembly. This is also a special occasion because, on 10 December — United Nations Human Rights Day — the Secretary-General of the United Nations accepted the Nobel Peace Prize — in recognition not only of the role played by him and by the United Nations in the past, but also of the role to be played in the future. Speaking about perspectives, the Secretary-General pointed out three key priorities for the United Nations in this century: eradicating poverty, preventing conflict and promoting democracy. Today, in discussing the report of the Economic and Social Council, we must consider its role in achieving those priorities, as well as the role ascribed to it under the United Nations Charter.

There is no doubt that the Economic and Social Council has gained in stature in recent years and that the present international environment is conducive to the further elaboration of its significant function. Greater interest in, and the resurgence of the importance of, the Economic and Social Council can be attributed in part to its relevance in this era of globalization and rediscovered global interdependence since the tragedy of 11 September. More than ever before, great benefits can be derived from a multilateral approach to economic and social concerns. The Economic and Social Council, as a principal United Nations body, has an important role in this regard, as well as comparative advantages which should be better exploited in its future activities.

The broad system of subsidiary bodies and functional commissions adds a particularly important dimension of expert input to the work of the Economic and Social Council. Consequently, my delegation values the central role of the relevant functional commissions in the review and follow-up processes of major United Nations conferences, as well as the coordinating dimension of the Economic and Social Council. In this context, the decisions of the substantive session, held in July, represent an important component of the continuing process of assessing progress and adjusting policy in the field of integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

The increasing development of the Economic and Social Council as a forum for policy dialogue was again demonstrated by the special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions held in May this year. Following on from the first meeting of this type within the United Nations system, held in 1998, the idea has been developed further, in terms of better organization, choice of theme, interactive round-table format and participation.

Undoubtedly, this event provides a unique opportunity for policy makers in finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation to engage in a meaningful dialogue. Furthermore, it serves as an excellent forum for strengthening links between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

However, we should not stop there. The overriding task now is to enhance the effectiveness of this interaction with the Economic and Social Council so as to include all relevant stakeholders — such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the private and civil sectors — as the primary instruments for developing a common vision in the economic and social fields.

As we look ahead, we hope that full use will be made of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next year, to build stronger and more efficacious

cooperation, with a view to developing a strategic plan of action for development. Indeed, a vital role could be played by the Economic and Social Council in coordinating a follow-up mechanism to Monterrey. It could serve as the body that oversees not only the substantive engagement and monitoring of implementation of commitments made at the Conference itself, but, more importantly, those derived from the Millennium Declaration.

On the issue of reform, my delegation also appreciates the steps taken to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council and improving its methods of work. We support further activities by the Bureau and the membership of the Council towards the full implementation of proposed reforms in the economic and social fields. The success of the thematic panels held during the year in preparation of the theme of the high-level segment has confirmed the highest level of professionalism and quality in choosing both the themes and the panellists. This practice has also contributed to transforming the Economic and Social Council into a year-round working body, a trend that should, in our view, be strongly supported.

Regarding recent developments in the field of peace-building and peacekeeping worldwide, it is clear that in a post-conflict environment there is a great potential for further cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the rest of the United Nations system. Therefore, a clearly defined role for the Economic and Social Council, including its cooperation with the other main bodies of the Organization, will continue to be very important for the efficient functioning of the United Nations system as a whole.

In that context, I wish to reiterate the necessity of cooperation between the two Councils — the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council — which should be guided by the principles of capacity-sharing. Especially in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building, the expertise of the Economic and Social Council regarding economic, social and cultural issues is crucial for the identification and removal of causes of potential conflict.

An important contribution to that end was the round table discussion recently organized by the International Peace Academy on the issue of the respective roles of the primary intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and cooperation and coordination between them in order to increase effectiveness in peace-building. The discussion suggested that the comparative advantages of the Economic and Social Council lie in several areas: its ability to bring together research and policy planning with operational activities and civil society participation, its link to the broader United Nations system through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, its special coordination role in relation to subsidiary machinery and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, its increasingly close relationship with the international financial institutions as part of the financing for development process, and its responsibility as an institutional base for coordination with respect to the executive boards of United Nations funds and programmes. The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council could also contribute to operations on the ground. The conclusions of this discussion have been distributed under this agenda item in a letter by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands.

Finally, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, for this initiative to place the report of the Economic and Social Council on the General Assembly's agenda for the first time, as well as for his guidance and successful completion of the work of the Council in the year 2001. With his wealth of experience and diplomatic skills, he has greatly contributed to the strengthening of this important body.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, whose outstanding leadership has enabled the Council to successfully carry out its demanding tasks. My appreciation also goes to the members of the Bureau for their steadfast support and dedication. In our view, the report of the Economic and Social Council and its addenda, though concise, provide us with a complete overview of all the proceedings and highlights of the Council in 2001.

Serving as a member of the Economic and Social Council, as well as of many of its subsidiary organs, the Republic of Korea wholeheartedly supports the new arrangements in the General Assembly for considering the work of the Economic and Social Council in plenary meeting. Given the magnitude and implications

of the Council's work for the entire United Nations system and beyond, key policy issues in the socio-economic fields need to be thoroughly scrutinized in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly, and feedback should be given to the Council if necessary.

In that regard, my delegation has been a strong supporter of the Economic and Social Council's resolution 2001/21 — among others — which recommends that the General Assembly examine the effectiveness of the review mechanisms for the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s. The resolution also decided to strengthen the Economic and Social Council's links with the General Assembly by bringing to its attention overarching policy issues.

I would also like to refer to the high-level special meetings of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, which were initiated by General Assembly resolution 50/227 with a view to revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. This year's special meeting was particularly remarkable, as it was held against the backdrop of a global economic slowdown. It is my sincere hope that more of these high-level dialogues on key policies and institutions will be further promoted.

Among the numerous achievements of the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the Republic of Korea attaches great significance to the outcome of the high-level segment, which produced an excellent ministerial declaration on the sustainable development of Africa. Given the development targets set out in the Millennium Declaration, including the overarching goal of halving the proportion of people in extreme poverty by the year 2015, the theme and outcome of the high-level segment was most appropriate.

It was particularly meaningful that, before the high-level segment, African leaders heralded a comprehensive strategy of new African initiatives, which were later renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I am confident that the General Assembly will consider the ten-year review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) while taking into account, among other things, the outcome of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on Africa.

The result of the coordination segment on the role of information and communication technologies was also commendable, as the agreed conclusion provides a number of policy options to promote information and communication technologies and to bridge the digital divide. The Council also highlighted the difficulties faced by developing countries in tapping the benefits of globalization, and called for strengthening the catalytic role of the United Nations in promoting access to knowledge and the transfer of technology to developing countries.

Many delegations have stressed the importance of closing the widening gap in digital capacities between developed and developing countries. In this context, I would like to underscore the need for the General Assembly to take up the issue of the digital divide, through in-depth discussions, to pave the way for substantive progress in this field.

I would like briefly to touch upon the work of the Council in the field of humanitarian assistance. In the light of the Economic and Social Council's important role in providing guidance to the United Nations system on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, it is quite regrettable that the Council has failed to produce an agreed conclusion. I sincerely hope that this will not set a precedent and that we will succeed in formulating an agreed conclusion in 2002.

Bearing in mind that a well-coordinated approach among the principal organs of the United Nations will produce synergy, the Republic of Korea hopes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council will further explore avenues to enhance cooperation and policy coherence in a mutually reinforcing manner. In this context, I would like to commend the arrangement by which the presidents of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council meet frequently to discuss and resolve pending issues and to map out future directions for the causes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Shah (Nepal): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Economic and Social Council for its 2001 report, contained in document A/56/3 and its addenda. Nepal attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council and supports its activities, which are aimed at promoting social and economic development in the world and at improving the

standard of living of the billions of poor people in the world.

The Charter has mandated the United Nations to promote high standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development, which are of foremost importance in their own right. These endeavours assume even more significance in view of the indissociable nexus between development and peace and justice. While the Economic and Social Council's scope of work and its relevance are global, the vast bulk of that work is concentrated on the developing countries, where two-thirds of the world population and the majority of the poor live.

As the Economic and Social Council is the leading organ for the coordination of all social and economic activities under the auspices of the United Nations, there is an undeniable imperative for it to meet its responsibilities. This means that on the one hand, the Council must try to meet the challenges posed by its daunting scope of work, and, on the other, there must also be a clear recognition of, and deference to, its role in the United Nations system and beyond.

In this context, coordination between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations agencies, and the mechanisms necessary to ensure it, become critically important in the successful implementation of the economic and social policies of the United Nations. Moreover, this will also promote synergy with respect to other areas of work, notably international peace and security, in which other organs of the United Nations might have the primary responsibility.

Effective coordination is essential between the Economic and Social Council and other international organizations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, regional banks, the private sector and civil society. In today's world, all of these key stakeholders are the principal players in reducing poverty, fostering development, expanding fair trade, ensuring a stable and conducive external environment and injecting external resources, all of which are necessary to fulfil the Council's mandate.

The Economic and Social Council cannot conceivably discharge its growing responsibility with the kind of Secretariat support that has been provided to date. Therefore, Nepal strongly believes that the Office of the President, as well as the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council, should be strengthened and provided with adequate financial and human resources, so that it can carry out its mandated tasks effectively.

Let me say a few words about the work of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. As in previous years, the Council, during its substantive session in July this year, considered a number of issues related to economic, social, cultural and humanitarian affairs and adopted many important resolutions in this respect. Of course, all of the issues considered by the Council are very important in their respective fields. However, my delegation finds particularly notable issues such as sustainable development, the global campaign for poverty eradication and the role of the United Nations in promoting development as well as the right to development, to food and to education.

Indeed, today, at a time when knowledge and technological development have become the principal engine of social and economic transformation, access to, and the transfer of, knowledge and technology must be accorded high priority. However, since the majority of the world's population still lives in poverty and has no access to the resources necessary to be connected with this new world, it has not yet been able to reap the full benefits of the information and communications revolution.

In this context, my delegation is encouraged by the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council. The agreed conclusions recognize the constraints I mentioned earlier and call for the strengthening of the United Nations system so that it can play a catalytic role in promoting the transfer of technology and access to knowledge, which is critical for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The agreed conclusions make various suggestions to the United Nations system to that effect. My delegation fully endorses these suggestions.

My delegation is also pleased to recall the three-day high-level segment of the substantive session, held from 16 to 18 July 2001, which, at the end of the segment, adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development. Though Africa-specific, the declaration is no less relevant to other parts of the developing world, which share the same problems and prospects in the

consultation of emerging democracies, regional mechanisms for preventing conflicts and special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development. Nepal fully supports the content of the ministerial declaration.

To conclude, my delegation supports the work of the Economic and Social Council in general and encourages it to continue its efforts to uplift the socio-economic status of the poorest and the neediest, with particular focus on the least developing countries.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to remind members that, as announced earlier, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Third Committee on Wednesday, 19 December, in the morning.

Furthermore, as previously announced, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 20 (*f*), "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", together with agenda item 43, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", on Thursday, 20 December, in the morning.

I should also like to inform members that consideration of agenda item 40, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", originally scheduled for Tuesday, 18 December, in the morning, will now be taken up as the second item, on Thursday, 20 December, in the afternoon. As the first item for that afternoon, the General Assembly will consider agenda item 52, "Multilingualism".

On Friday, 21 December, in the morning, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Second Committee.

Announcement

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs.

Members will recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999, decided to establish an Open-ended Informal Consultative Process in order to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly of developments in ocean affairs by considering the Secretary-General's report on oceans and the law of the sea. It also decided that the meeting of this process would be coordinated by two co-chairpersons, who would be appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

In this regard, the first and second meeting of the Consultative Process were held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 May to 2 June 2000 and from 7 to 11 May 2001. The two previous meetings were co-chaired by the Permanent Representative Samoa to the United Nations, Ambassador Tuiloma Slade, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom, appointed by my predecessor.

Members will further recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 56/12 of 28 November 2001, requests the Secretary-General to convene the third meeting of the Consultative Process in New York from 8 to 15 April 2002.

With regard to the co-chairpersons of the third meeting of the Consultative Process next year, I have conducted extensive consultations, both through the chairs of regional groups and through a significant number of individual delegations representing all regions.

During these consultations, wide support was expressed once again for the co-chairpersons of the first and second meetings of the Consultative Process. Both of them were highly praised for their excellence as mediators and consensus builders.

It is therefore my pleasure to announce my decision to re-appoint Ambassador Tuiloma Slade, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom as the two co-chairpersons of the third meeting of the Consultative Process. I am confident that their leadership will greatly contribute to achieving a successful outcome to the meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.